MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

VOLUME 4

COLLECTING

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY Nos. 121-125

& THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 126-130

STAN LEE • JACK KIRBY

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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THE
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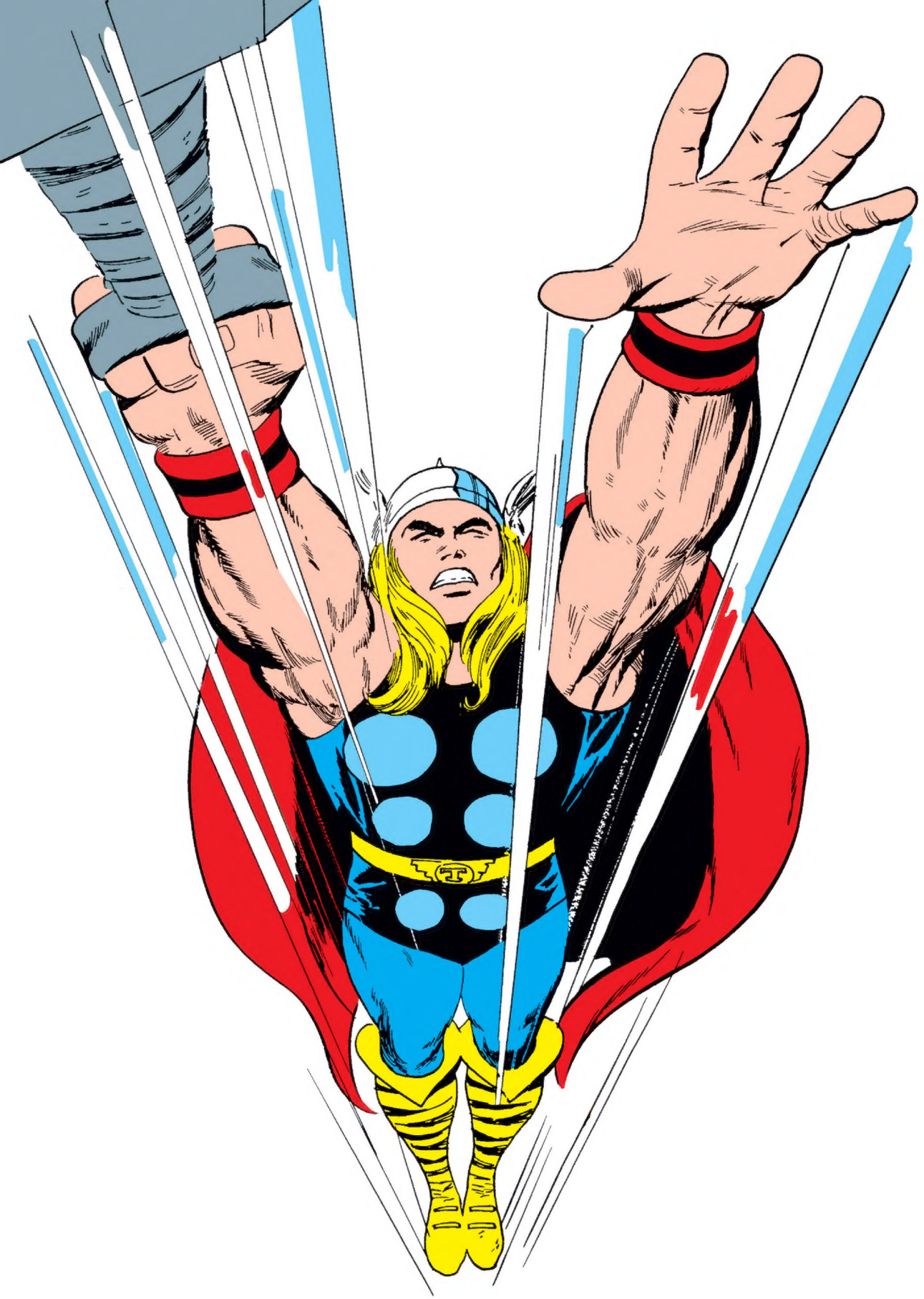

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

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INTRODUCTION
BY STAN LEE

Hi, Heroes!

Welcome to another great anthology of Thor classics, O True Believer. Know ye well, mortal, we're glad to have you even if you're not a legal resident of Asgard!

Asgard! Home of the legendary Norse gods and most especially, home of the mighty Thor, God of Thunder, hero of heroes and, when Earth is imperiled, when the soul-stirring battle cry "Avengers Assemble" rings out, an Avenger till the end!

There are so many special things to tell about the spectacular son of Odin that I hardly know where to begin. For example, when I wrote Thor's early stories, I felt it wouldn't be right to simply have him talk like any ordinary Joe. You may be surprised to learn that I've never actually met or spoken to a Norse god, but still it seemed to me that the residents of Asgard should have their own special manner of speaking. So I borrowed some phraseology from the Bible, from Shakespeare and from *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Of course, I added plenty of my own far-out expressions and, lo and behold, Thor-Speak was born!

Of course, we didn't have to feature Norse gods in our series. There were plenty of Greek and Roman gods to pick from and other ones as well. But I felt that most people knew Zeus and Mars and Apollo and the rest, while the Norse gods hadn't gotten as much publicity, and hey, Marvel has always been an equal-opportunity publicizer!

Besides, I couldn't wait to ask Jack Kirby to design the costumes and the general style of depicting the Norse gods. Nobody could have done it better, or even as well. By the time "King" Kirby was finished I, and the rest of fandom, felt as if we had known Thor, his awesome allies and hallowed Asgard, all our lives. Everything looked so regal, so resplendent—so utterly godlike, as only Jack could have portrayed it.

Another thing I'm really proud of is the way we turned a legendary god into a modern superhero by giving him two identities. In the past annals of literature not many gods have also been lame doctors living in New York City in modern times. But, as you know, Marvel was never known for doing things the usual way.

In case you get the idea that Odin's favorite son is one of my favorites, too, you're right. And, if you've never read the awesome adventures of the God of Thunder, you couldn't have picked a better place to start.

Let me give you a brief but bedazzling rundown on the fantasy and excitement awaiting you on the pages ahead…

Of course you'll meet one of comicdom's greatest villains, Thor's evil half-brother Loki. He's such a terrific, offbeat baddie that he truly deserves to have his own series one day, but even when it comes to super villains, the ol' hammer slinger's epics don't take a back seat to anyone! Starting with the Absorbing Man Thor has to figure out how to defeat a villain who can absorb his own powers and toss them back at him! Plus, during the battle, a special Earthling learns Thor's human identity. This one you won't soon forget.

In the thrill-a-minute "The Grandeur and the Glory," Thor not only battles the diabolical Demon but finally reveals his greatest secret to the lovely Jane Foster. And, as an added bonus, you'll meet none other than Hercules, too!

"When Meet the Immortals" pits Thor against Hercules. (See? We had a reason for planting him in the previous epic.) But you'll be amazed to see that Thor actually loses this battle—and you'll be even more amazed when you see the reason why.

Now it gets still more intense. "Whom the Gods Would Destroy" presents the unthinkable. Thor dares to rebel against the omnipotent All-Father, mighty Odin himself, in order to return to Earth and battle The Nordic Pantheon! And wait'll you see what happens to Hercules in this one!

It's hard to believe, but they just keep getting better and better. For proof positive, read "The Hammer and the Holocaust" in which the super-powerful god Pluto poses as a Hollywood producer who dupes Hercules into becoming ruler of Hell. You'll also be shocked to meet Seidring the Merciless who—aw, I can't tell you any more—it'll mess with your mind!

In the truly unpredictable "The Power of Pluto" Hercules actually replaces Pluto as the ruler of the Netherworld, but best of all, wait'll you meet the queen of the Netherworld. I guarantee that you won't see many female comic book characters as gripping and eye-filling as the heavenly but heinous Hyppolita!

"The Verdict of Zeus" is a real cliffhanger—almost too much to describe in this brief space. Thor zooms back to Asgard from Earth in order to learn his fate. But you won't have to learn it the hard way like he does. You just have to turn the pages to discover that Thor has to replace Hercules in a battle for his freedom from Pluto. And as if that's not enough, we also introduce Tana Nile who's not quite what you think she is!

As you know, we always wrap up with a bang and "Thunder in the Netherworld" is no exception. Fighting against the hordes of Pluto, Thor has to tackle Cerebrus in order to free Hercules. But Tana Nile makes Thor lose Jane Foster just as Odin permits him to marry her. And you thought you had troubles!

By the way, in case I never told you, I'm real proud of the titles I always gave these Thor yarns. I figure any of those titles would be perfect for the big budget Thor feature film which we'll soon be producing.

Well, I guess that wraps it up for now. Naturally, I could keep yakkin' about Thor for another hundred pages or so, but I can't wait to reread the classics that follow, so here's a suggestion—why don'tcha join me?

EXCELSIOR!

2005

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
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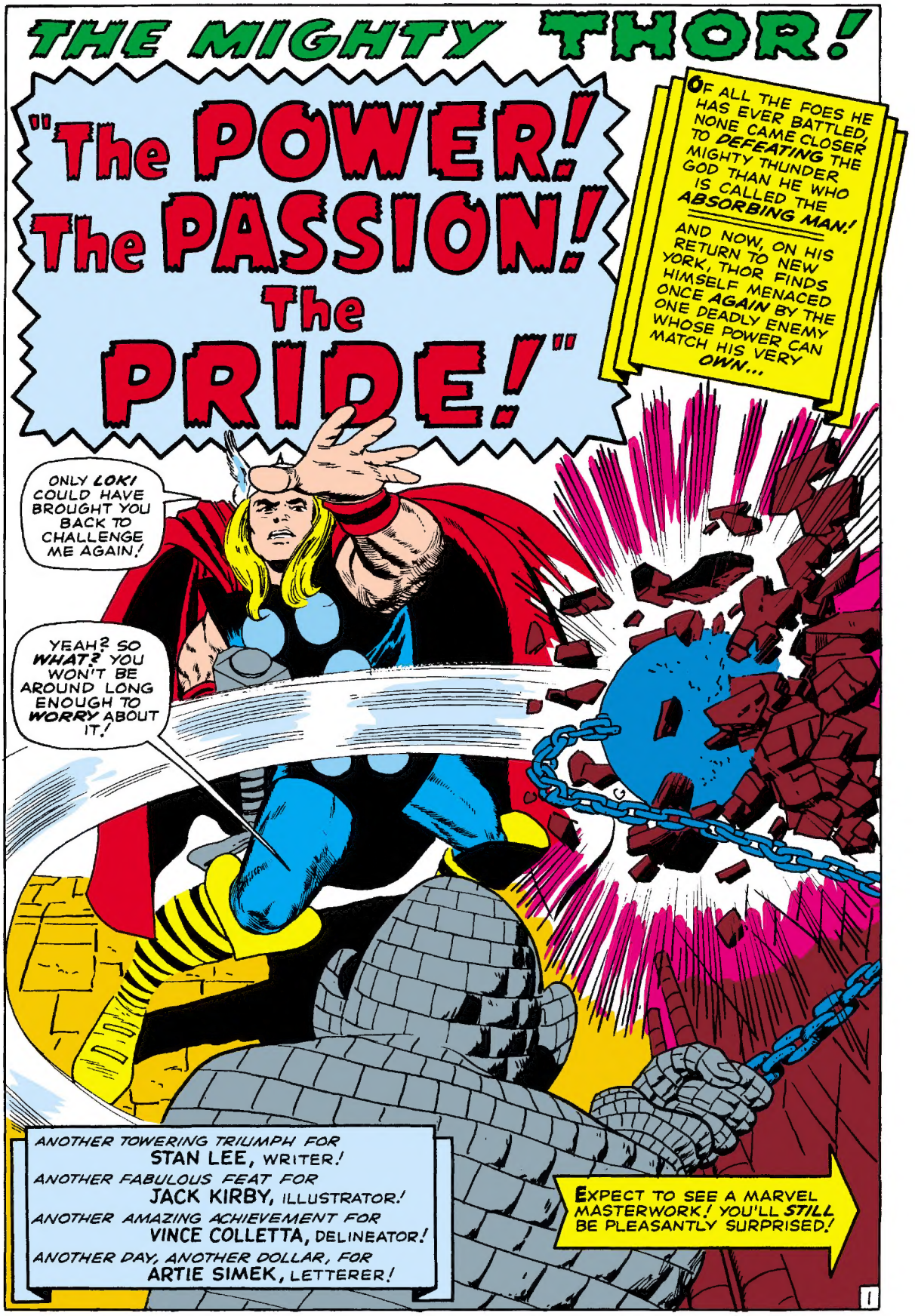
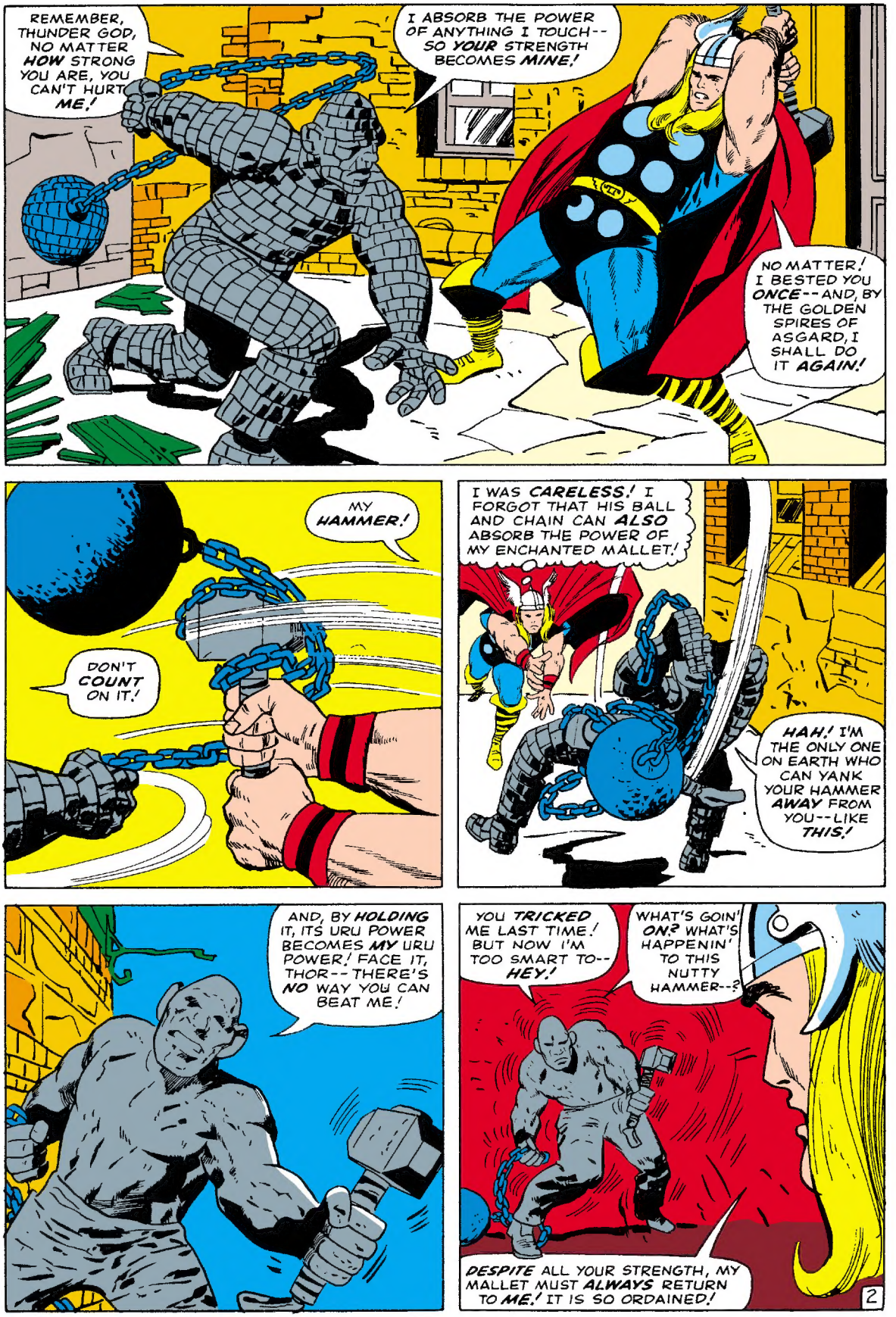
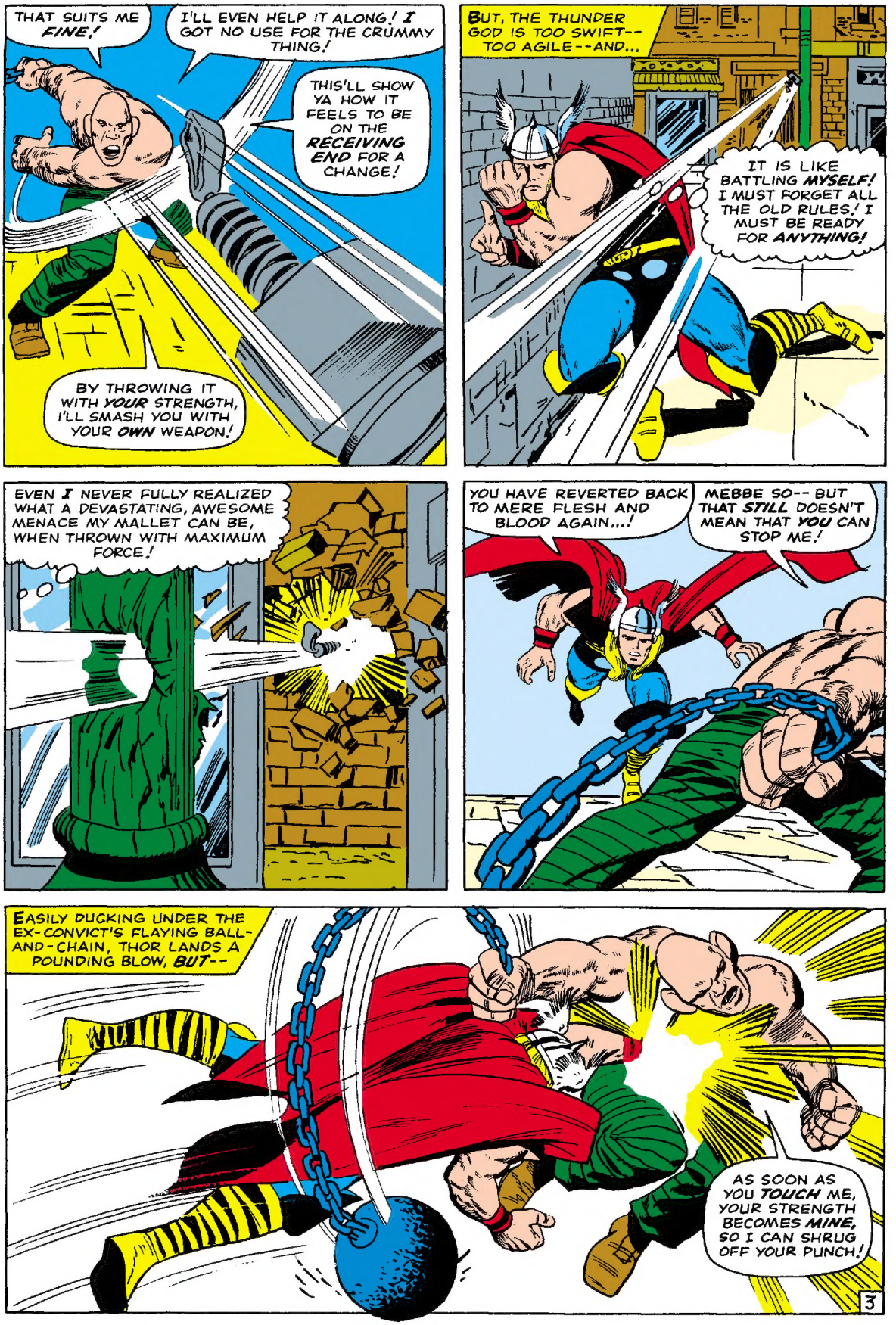
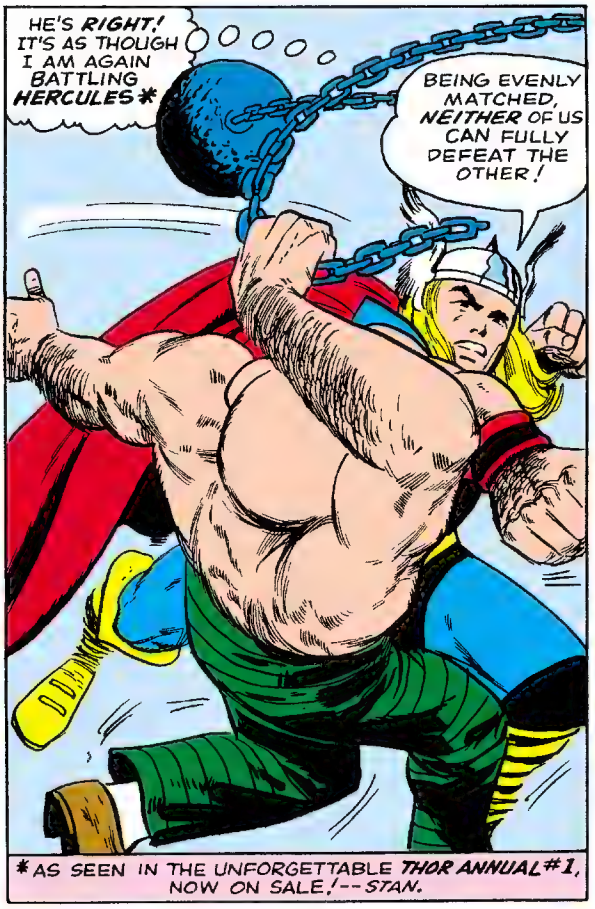
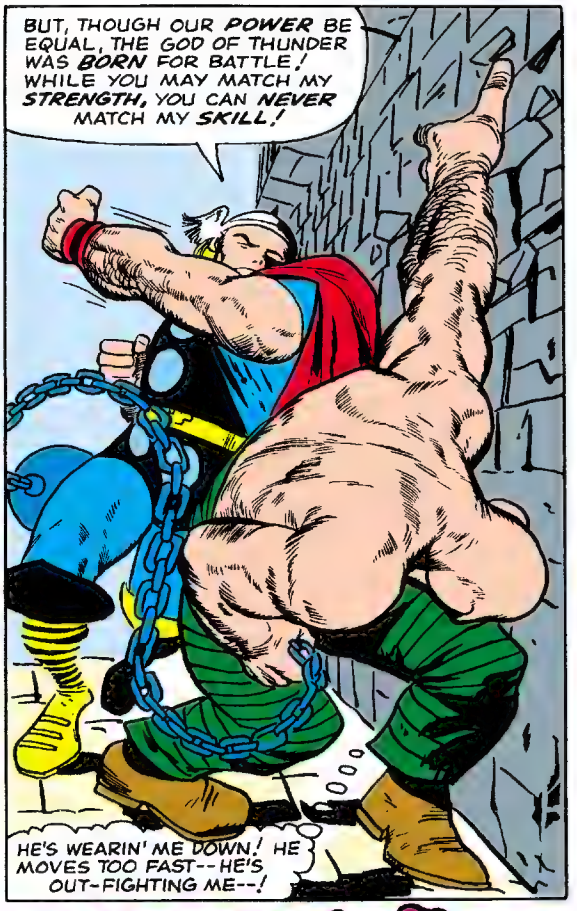
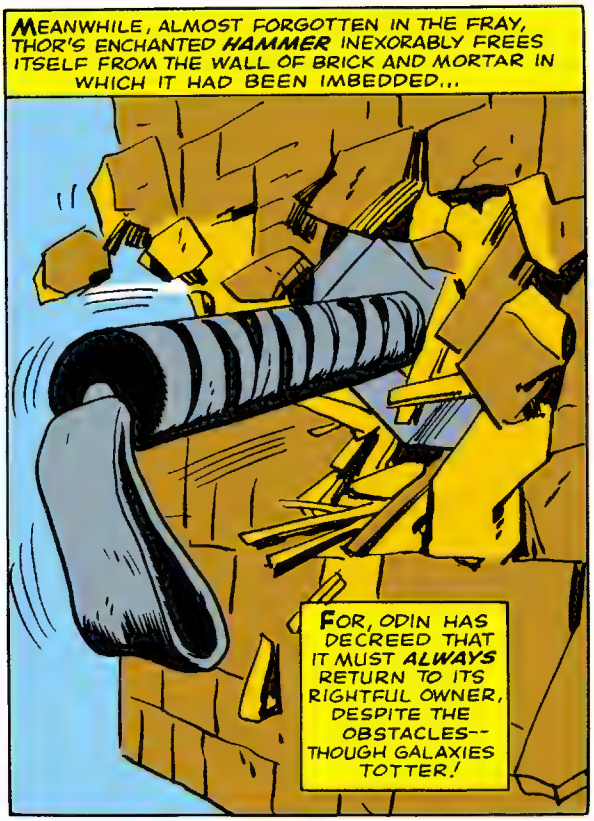

THE MIGHTY THOR!
"The POWER! The PASSION! The PRIDE!"
OF ALL THE FOES HE HAS EVER BATTLED, NONE CAME CLOSER TO DEFEATING THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD THAN HE WHO IS CALLED THE ABSORBING MAN!
AND NOW, ON HIS RETURN TO NEW YORK, THOR FINDS HIMSELF MENACED ONCE AGAIN BY THE ONE DEADLY ENEMY WHOSE POWER CAN MATCH HIS VERY OWN...
ONLY LOKI COULD HAVE BROUGHT YOU BACK TO CHALLENGE ME AGAIN!
YEAH? SO WHAT? YOU WON'T BE AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT IT!
ANOTHER TOWERING TRIUMPH FOR STAN LEE, WRITER!
ANOTHER FABULOUS FEAT FOR JACK KIRBY, ILLUSTRATOR!
ANOTHER AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT FOR VINCE COLLETTA, DELINEATOR!
ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR, FOR ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER!
EXPECT TO SEE A MARVEL MASTERWORK! YOU'LL STILL BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED!
1

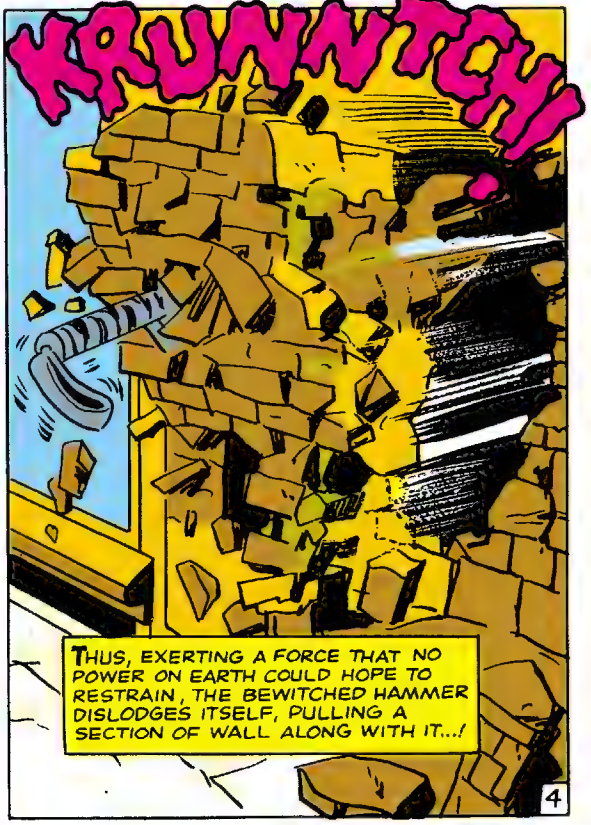

REMEMBER, THUNDER GOD, NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE, YOU CAN'T HURT ME!
I ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYTHING I TOUCH--SO YOUR STRENGTH BECOMES MINE!
NO MATTER! I BESTED YOU ONCE--AND, BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES OF ASGARD, I SHALL DO IT AGAIN!
MY HAMMER!
DON'T COUNT ON IT!
I WAS CARELESS! I FORGOT THAT HIS BALL AND CHAIN CAN ALSO ABSORB THE POWER OF MY ENCHANTED MALLET!
HAH! I'M THE ONLY ONE ON EARTH WHO CAN YANK YOUR HAMMER AWAY FROM YOU--LIKE THIS!
AND, BY HOLDING IT, ITS URU POWER BECOMES MY URU POWER! FACE IT, THOR--THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN BEAT ME!
YOU TRICKED ME LAST TIME! BUT NOW I'M TOO SMART TO--HEY!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON? WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO THIS NUTTY HAMMER--?
DESPITE ALL YOUR STRENGTH, MY MALLET MUST ALWAYS RETURN TO ME! IT IS SO ORDAINED!
2

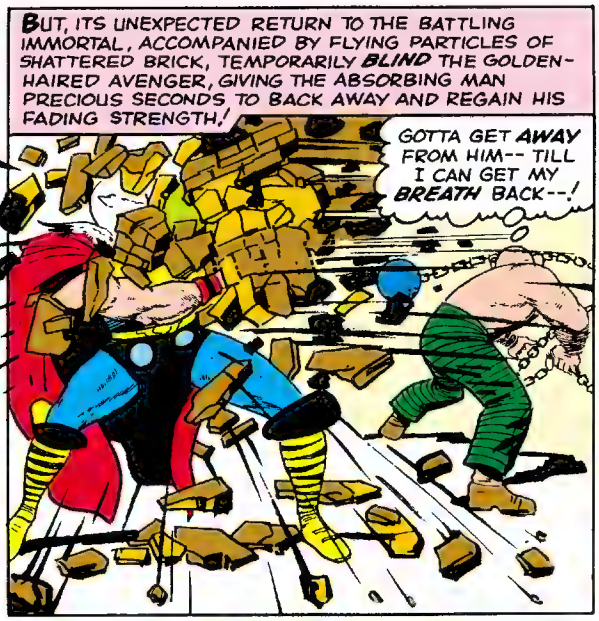

THAT SUITS ME FINE!
I'LL EVEN HELP IT ALONG! I GOT NO USE FOR THE CRUMMY THING!
THIS'LL SHOW YA HOW IT FEELS TO BE ON THE RECEIVING END FOR A CHANGE!
BY THROWING IT WITH YOUR STRENGTH, I'LL SMASH YOU WITH YOUR OWN WEAPON!
BUT, THE THUNDER GOD IS TOO SWIFT-- TOO AGILE--AND...
IT IS LIKE BATTLING MYSELF! I MUST FORGET ALL THE OLD RULES! I MUST BE READY FOR ANYTHING!
EVEN I NEVER FULLY REALIZED WHAT A DEVASTATING, AWESOME MENACE MY MALLET CAN BE, WHEN THROWN WITH MAXIMUM FORCE!
YOU HAVE REVERTED BACK TO MERE FLESH AND BLOOD AGAIN...!
MEBBE SO-- BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU CAN STOP ME!
EASILY DUCKING UNDER THE EX-CONVICT'S FLAYING BALL-AND-CHAIN, THOR LANDS A POUNDING BLOW, BUT--
AS SOON AS YOU TOUCH ME, YOUR STRENGTH BECOMES MINE, SO I CAN SHRUG OFF YOUR PUNCH!
3

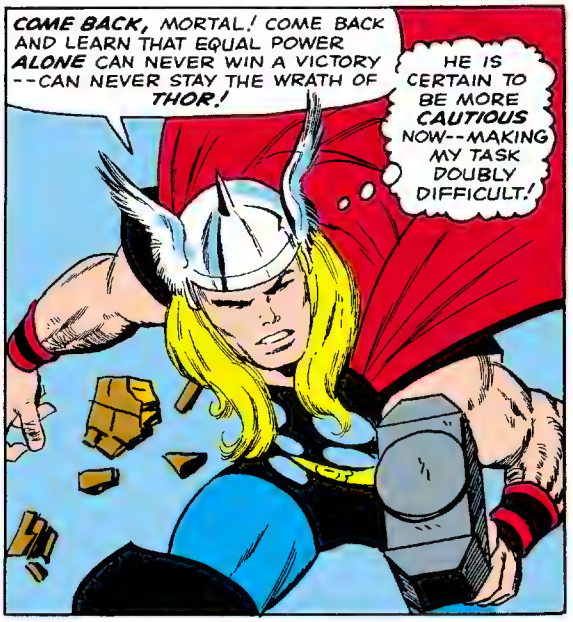

HE'S RIGHT! IT'S AS THOUGH I AM AGAIN BATTLING HERCULES*
BEING EVENLY MATCHED, NEITHER OF US CAN FULLY DEFEAT THE OTHER!
*AS SEEN IN THE UNFORGETTABLE THOR ANNUAL #1, NOW ON SALE!--STAN.


BUT, THOUGH OUR POWER BE EQUAL, THE GOD OF THUNDER WAS BORN FOR BATTLE! WHILE YOU MAY MATCH MY STRENGTH, YOU CAN NEVER MATCH MY SKILL!
HE'S WEARIN' ME DOWN! HE MOVES TOO FAST--HE'S OUT-FIGHTING ME--!

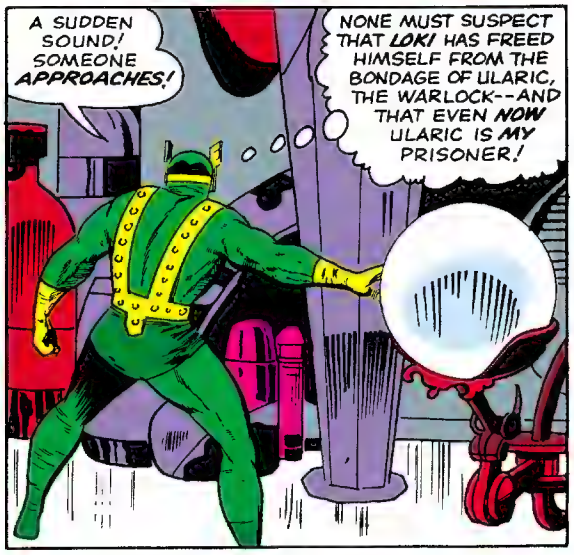

MEANWHILE, ALMOST FORGOTTEN IN THE FRAY, THOR'S ENCHANTED HAMMER INEXORABLY FREES ITSELF FROM THE WALL OF BRICK AND MORTAR IN WHICH IT HAD BEEN IMBEDDED...
FOR, ODIN HAS DECREED THAT IT MUST ALWAYS RETURN TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER, DESPITE THE OBSTACLES--THOUGH GALAXIES TOTTER!


KRUNNTCH!
THUS, EXERTING A FORCE THAT NO POWER ON EARTH COULD HOPE TO RESTRAIN, THE BEWITCHED HAMMER DISLODGES ITSELF, PULLING A SECTION OF WALL ALONG WITH IT...!


BUT, ITS UNEXPECTED RETURN TO THE BATTLING IMMORTAL, ACCOMPANIED BY FLYING PARTICLES OF SHATTERED BRICK, TEMPORARILY BLIND THE GOLDEN-HAIRED AVENGER, GIVING THE ABSORBING MAN PRECIOUS SECONDS TO BACK AWAY AND REGAIN HIS FADING STRENGTH!
GOTTA GET AWAY FROM HIM-- TILL I CAN GET MY BREATH BACK--!


COME BACK, MORTAL! COME BACK AND LEARN THAT EQUAL POWER ALONE CAN NEVER WIN A VICTORY --CAN NEVER STAY THE WRATH OF THOR!
HE IS CERTAIN TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS NOW--MAKING MY TASK DOUBLY DIFFICULT!

MEANWHILE, FROM THE OLYMPIAN HEIGHTS OF ASGARD, THE SLYEST, MOST MERCILESS, MOST SINISTER EYES OF ALL WATCH THE EPIC BATTLE WITH GROWING CONCERN...!
THE ABSORBING MAN MUST DEFEAT MY ACCURSED HALF-BROTHER! EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON IT!
ONLY WITH THOR'S COMPLETE DESTRUCTION WILL I BE FREE TO CHALLENGE THE RULE OF ODIN HIMSELF!


A SUDDEN SOUND! SOMEONE APPROACHES!
NONE MUST SUSPECT THAT LOKI HAS FREED HIMSELF FROM THE BONDAGE OF ULARIC, THE WARLOCK--AND THAT EVEN NOW ULARIC IS MY PRISONER!

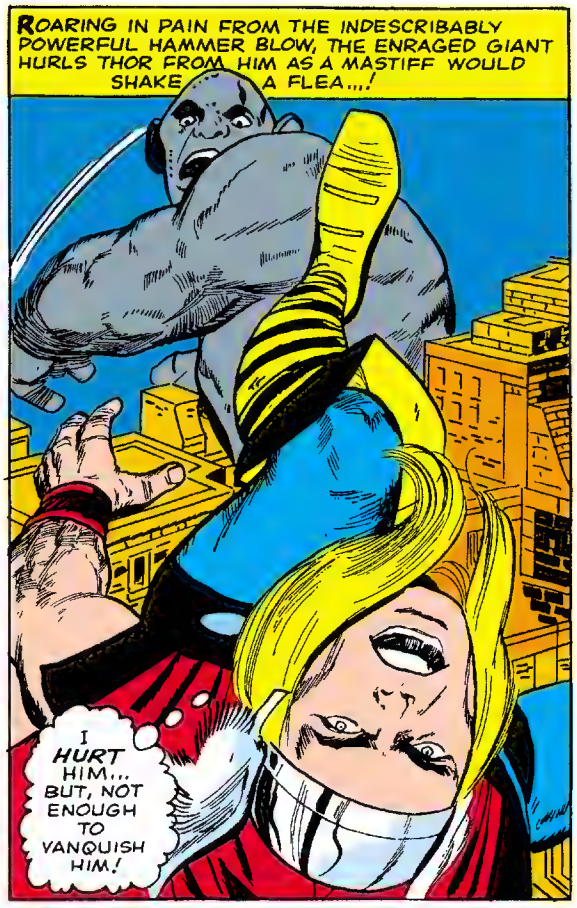
BALDER, THE BRAVE! WHY COMES A FRIEND OF THOR TO THE PLACE WHERE LOKI IS CONFINED?
IT IS BECAUSE OF MY FRIEND-SHIP FOR THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE THAT I COME TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN DO HIM NO FURTHER HARM!

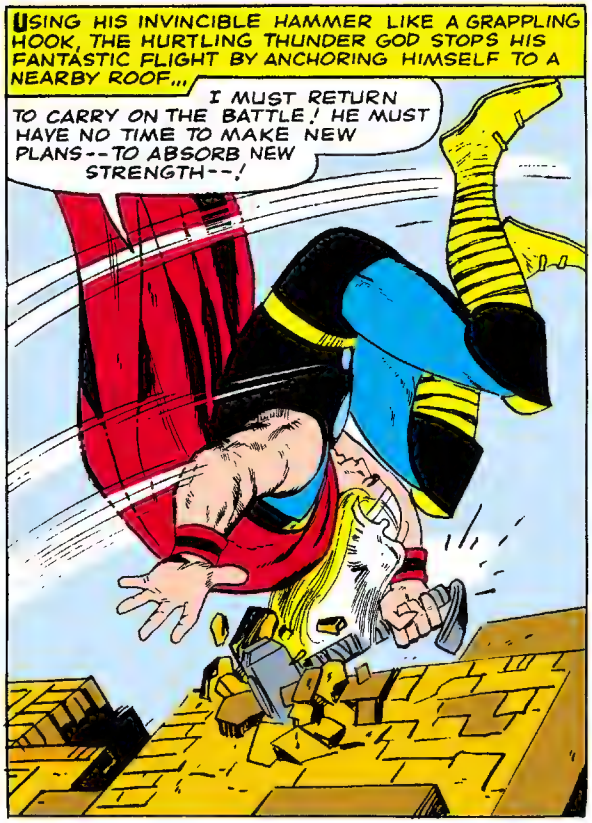
WHERE IS ULARIC, THE ONE YOU HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO SERVE?
HE IS OFF ON AN ERRAND FOR ODIN! I HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO REMAIN HERE AND REPLENISH HIS SORCERER'S POTIONS TILL HE RETURNS!
SO TRUSTING IS THE INNOCENT BALDER, HE WILL NEVER THINK TO DOUBT MY WORD!

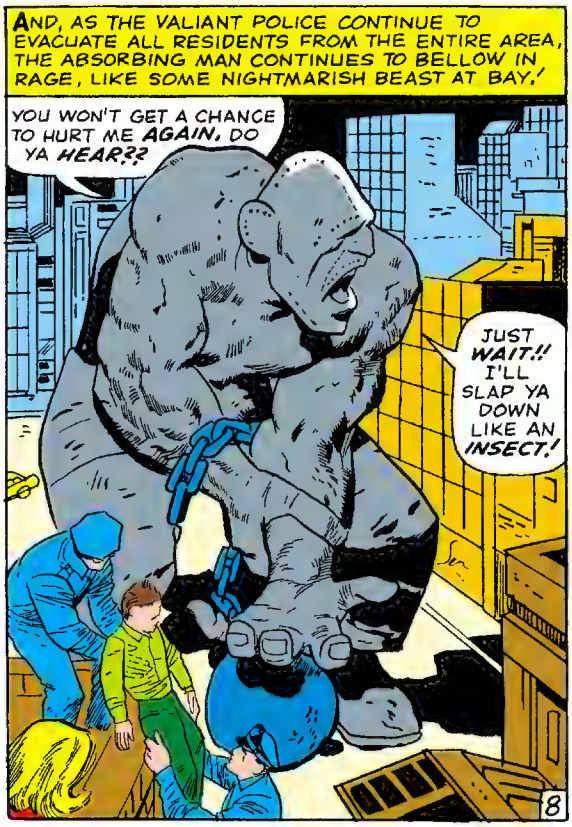
WHERE GO YOU NOW, THOU WITLESS MILKSOP!
ANY PLACE WHERE THE VERY AIR ITSELF IS NOT HEAVILY-LADEN WITH THE AURA OF LOKI'S EVIL!
THE VERY SIGHT OF THEE IS OFFENSIVE TO MINE EYES!
HOW DIFFERENT BALDER'S TUNE SHALL BE--IF HE IS STILL ALIVE-- WHEN LOKI IS LORD OF ASGARD!
AND, WITH THE CRUSHING DEFEAT OF THOR, THAT GREAT MOMENT WILL SOON BE HERE!
MEANWHILE, EVEN AS LOKI SCHEMES...
THE ABSORBING MAN IS CAUSING PANIC IN THE STREETS!
EVEN THE PRESENCE OF THOR SEEMS NOT TO REASSURE THE MILLING THRONGS!
OUR BULLETS ARE USELESS AGAINST HIM! HE SEEMS TO ABSORB THEIR STEEL AS THEY TOUCH HIM!
WEAPONS ALONE CANNOT TURN HIM BACK!
YOU MUST HOLD BACK THE CROWDS! THE POWER OF THOR IS NEEDED HERE!
HE HAS BECOME MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER!
AND YET, I DARE NOT FAIL! THE FATE OF A WORLD MAY BE AT STAKE!

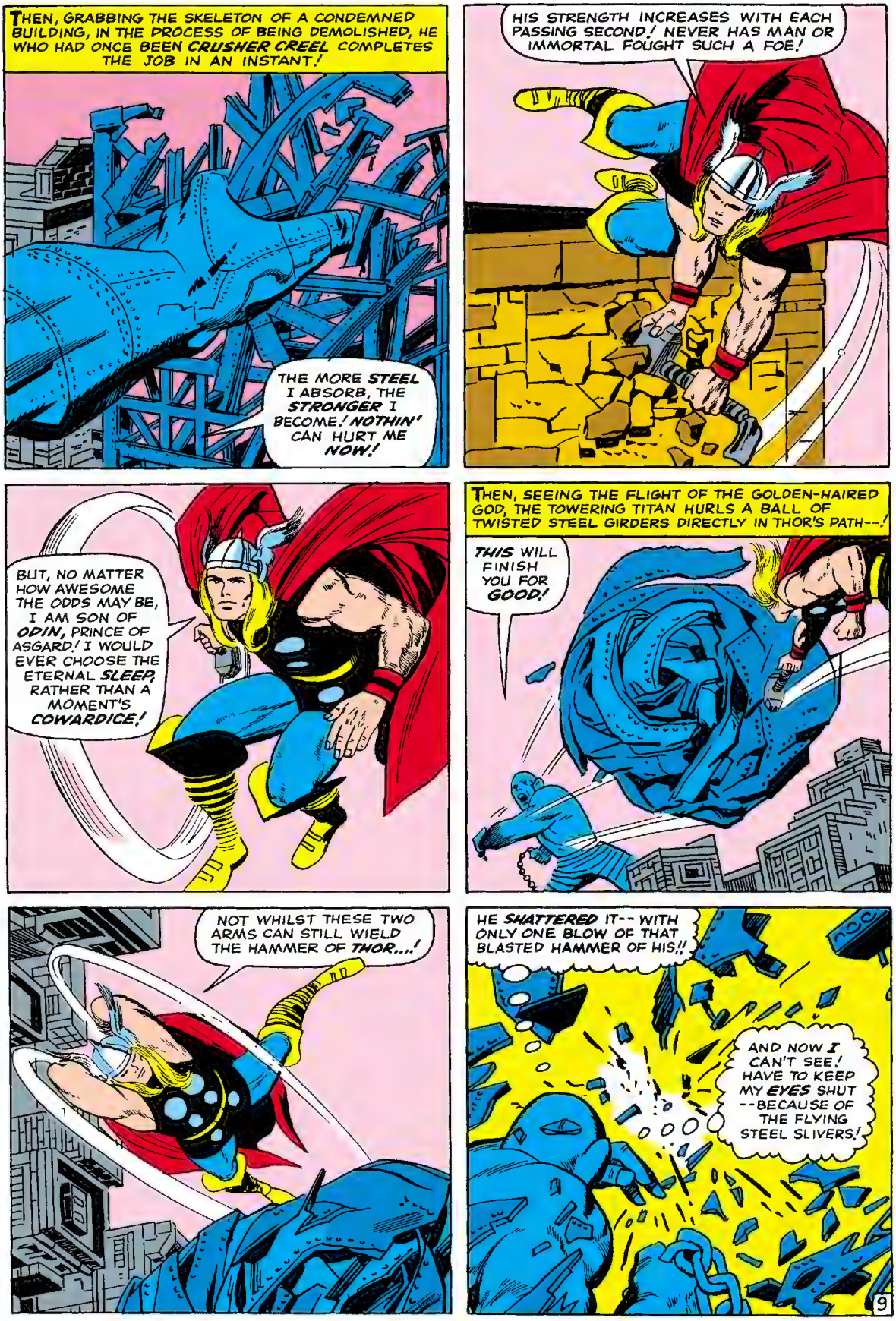
YOU COULD NOT DEFEAT ME *BEFORE*--SO NOW YOU SEEK VICTORY BY ABSORBING THE CONCRETE AND STEEL OF THE BUILDINGS AROUND YOU--BY TRANSFORMING YOURSELF INTO A VERITABLE *COLOSSUS* OF STONE AND IRON!
CALL IT WHAT YOU *WANT* TO, THUNDER GOD--!
YOU JUST MADE YOUR BIGGEST MISTAKE, ATTACKIN' ME *NOW*--YOUR *LAST* MISTAKE!

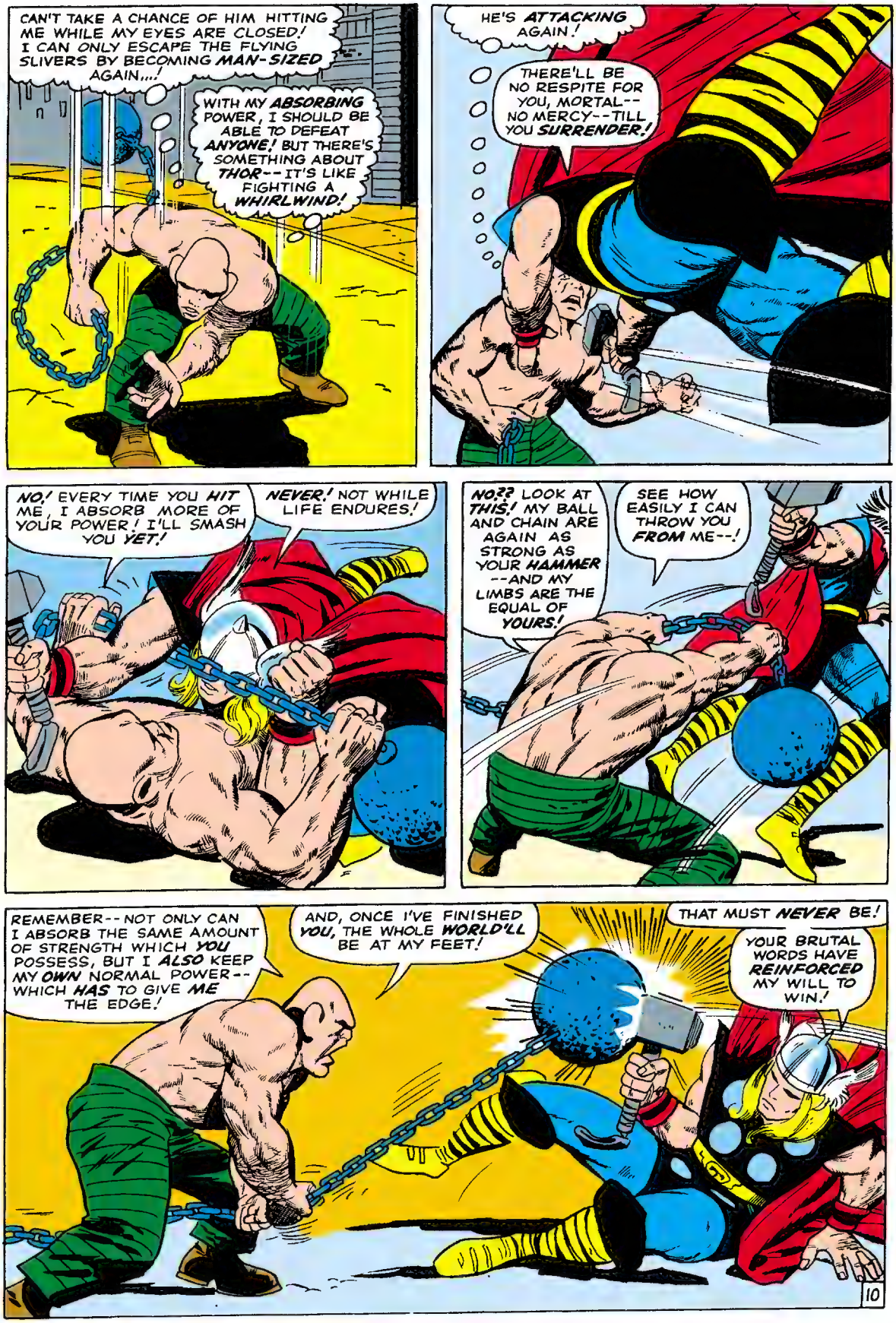
HIS FIST IS BLUDGEONING OUT TOWARDS ME--THIS IS MY CHANCE--ONE SHATTERING HAMMER BLOW, NO MATTER WHAT HIS STRENGTH MAY BE!


ROARING IN PAIN FROM THE INDESCRIBABLY POWERFUL HAMMER BLOW, THE ENRAGED GIANT HURLS THOR FROM HIM AS A MASTIFF WOULD SHAKE A FLEA...!
I HURT HIM... BUT, NOT ENOUGH TO VANQUISH HIM!

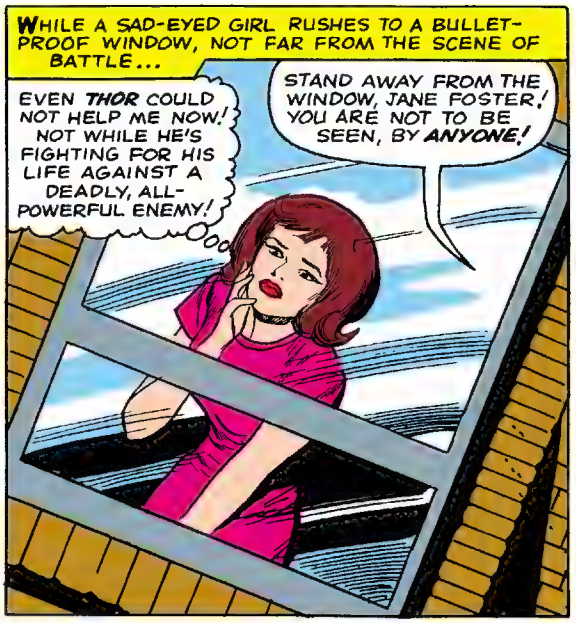

USING HIS INVINCIBLE HAMMER LIKE A GRAPPLING HOOK, THE HURTLING THUNDER GOD STOPS HIS FANTASTIC FLIGHT BY ANCHORING HIMSELF TO A NEARBY ROOF...
I MUST RETURN TO CARRY ON THE BATTLE! HE MUST HAVE NO TIME TO MAKE NEW PLANS--TO ABSORB NEW STRENGTH--!

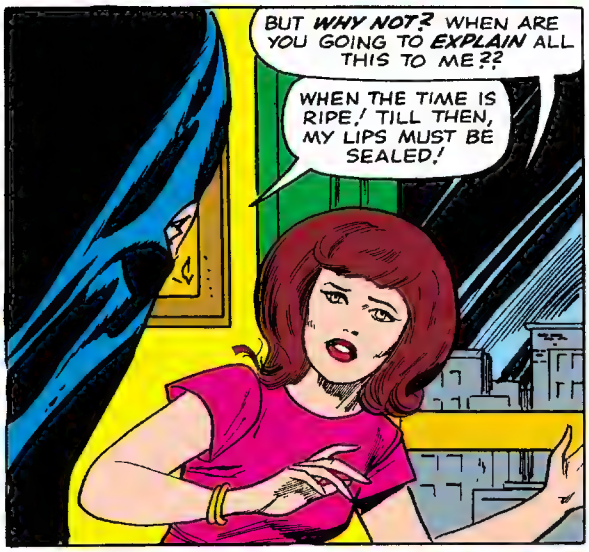

AND, AS THE VALIANT POLICE CONTINUE TO EVACUATE ALL RESIDENTS FROM THE ENTIRE AREA, THE ABSORBING MAN CONTINUES TO BELLOW IN RAGE, LIKE SOME NIGHTMARISH BEAST AT BAY.
YOU WON'T GET A CHANCE TO HURT ME AGAIN, DO YA HEAR??
JUST WAIT!! I'LL SLAP YA DOWN LIKE AN INSECT!


THEN, GRABBING THE SKELETON OF A CONDEMNED BUILDING, IN THE PROCESS OF BEING DEMOLISHED, HE WHO HAD ONCE BEEN CRUSHER CREEL COMPLETES THE JOB IN AN INSTANT.!
THE MORE STEEL I ABSORB, THE STRONGER I BECOME.! NOTHIN' CAN HURT ME NOW!
HIS STRENGTH INCREASES WITH EACH PASSING SECOND.! NEVER HAS MAN OR IMMORTAL FOUGHT SUCH A FOE.!
BUT, NO MATTER HOW AWESOME THE ODDS MAY BE, I AM SON OF ODIN, PRINCE OF ASGARD.! I WOULD EVER CHOOSE THE ETERNAL SLEEP, RATHER THAN A MOMENT'S COWARDICE.!
THEN, SEEING THE FLIGHT OF THE GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD, THE TOWERING TITAN HURLS A BALL OF TWISTED STEEL GIRDERS DIRECTLY IN THOR'S PATH--.!
THIS WILL FINISH YOU FOR GOOD!
NOT WHILST THESE TWO ARMS CAN STILL WIELD THE HAMMER OF THOR....!
HE SHATTERED IT-- WITH ONLY ONE BLOW OF THAT BLASTED HAMMER OF HIS.!!
AND NOW I CAN'T SEE.! HAVE TO KEEP MY EYES SHUT --BECAUSE OF THE FLYING STEEL SLIVERS.!

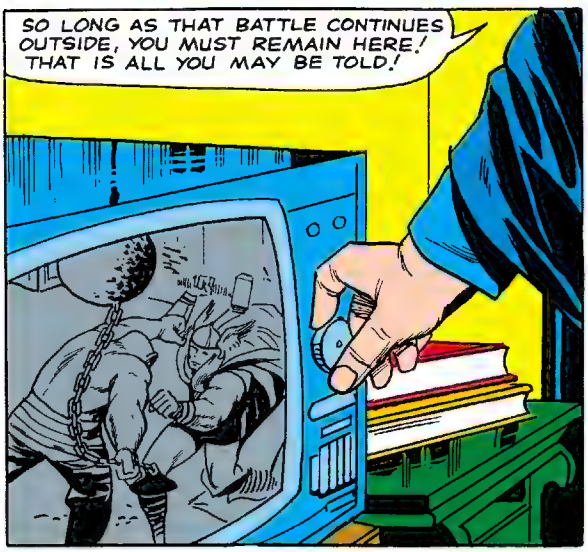

CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE OF HIM HITTING ME WHILE MY EYES ARE CLOSED! I CAN ONLY ESCAPE THE FLYING SLIVERS BY BECOMING MAN-SIZED AGAIN...!
WITH MY ABSORBING POWER, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEFEAT ANYONE! BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THOR-- IT'S LIKE FIGHTING A WHIRLWIND!
HE'S ATTACKING AGAIN!
THERE'LL BE NO RESPITE FOR YOU, MORTAL-- NO MERCY--TILL YOU SURRENDER!
NO! EVERY TIME YOU HIT ME, I ABSORB MORE OF YOUR POWER! I'LL SMASH YOU YET!
NEVER! NOT WHILE LIFE ENDURES!
NO?? LOOK AT THIS! MY BALL AND CHAIN ARE AGAIN AS STRONG AS YOUR HAMMER --AND MY LIMBS ARE THE EQUAL OF YOURS!
SEE HOW EASILY I CAN THROW YOU FROM ME--!
REMEMBER-- NOT ONLY CAN I ABSORB THE SAME AMOUNT OF STRENGTH WHICH YOU POSSESS, BUT I ALSO KEEP MY OWN NORMAL POWER-- WHICH HAS TO GIVE ME THE EDGE!
AND, ONCE I'VE FINISHED YOU, THE WHOLE WORLD'LL BE AT MY FEET!
THAT MUST NEVER BE!
YOUR BRUTAL WORDS HAVE REINFORCED MY WILL TO WIN!
10

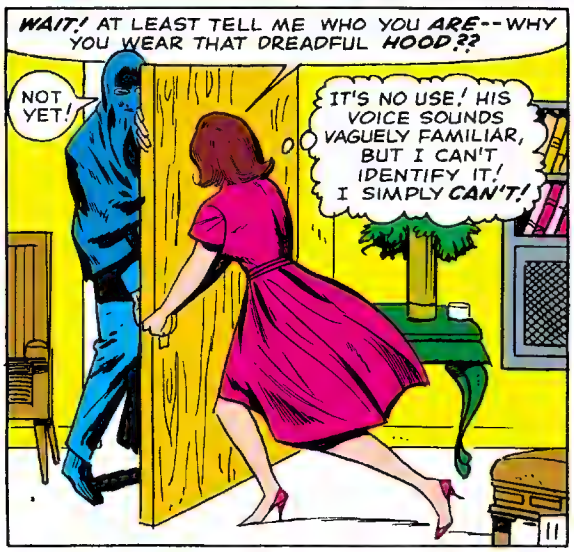
AND, AS THE GRIM BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE, THE UNTIRING POLICE RESPOND TO THE CRISIS WITH SPEED AND VALOR...
SORRY, FOLKS! THIS AREA IS OFF-LIMITS! TAKE SHELTER IN THE ARMORY ON 34TH STREET...!
SO FAR, SO GOOD! AT LEAST NO BYSTANDERS HAVE BEEN INJURED!

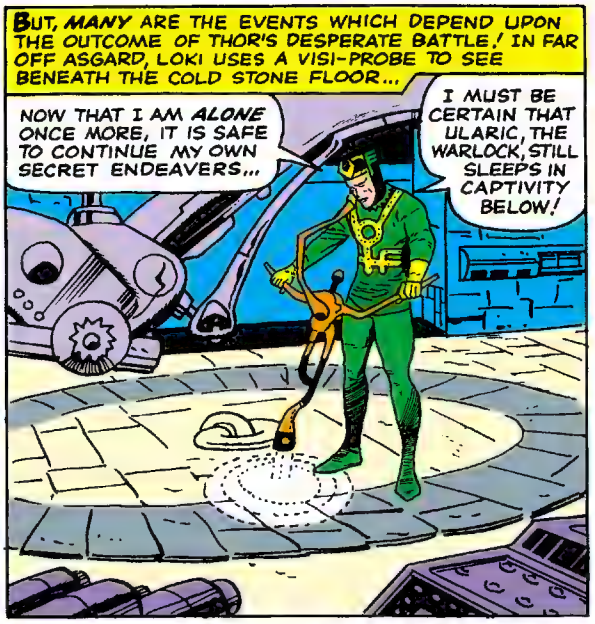

WHILE A SAD-EYED GIRL RUSHES TO A BULLET-PROOF WINDOW, NOT FAR FROM THE SCENE OF BATTLE...
EVEN THOR COULD NOT HELP ME NOW! NOT WHILE HE'S FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE AGAINST A DEADLY, ALL-POWERFUL ENEMY!
STAND AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, JANE FOSTER! YOU ARE NOT TO BE SEEN, BY ANYONE!

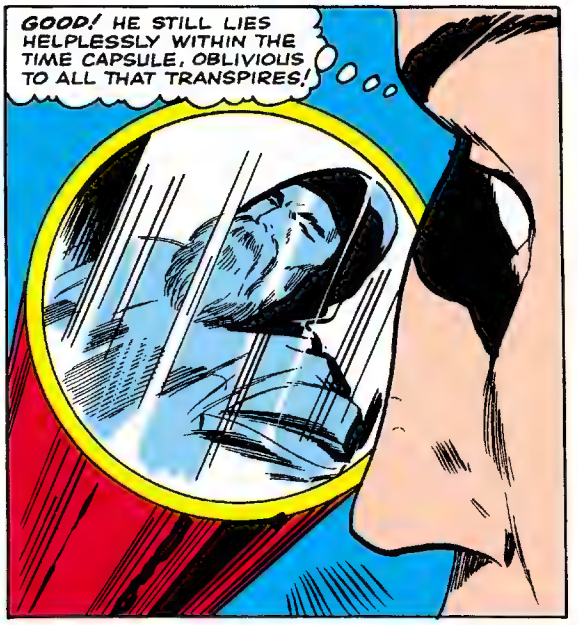

BUT WHY NOT? WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO EXPLAIN ALL THIS TO ME??
WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE! TILL THEN, MY LIPS MUST BE SEALED!

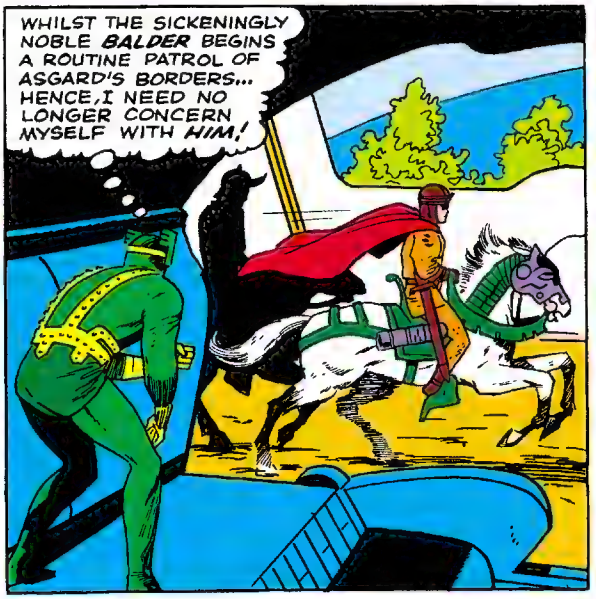
YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED WELL, HAVE YOU NOT? YOU HAVE NOT BEEN HARMED--YOUR PRIVACY HAS BEEN RESPECTED--AND YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED EVERY COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE!
THAT'S TRUE! BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY I WAS BROUGHT TO THIS PLACE--WHY I'M NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE?
I CAN ONLY REPEAT THAT IT IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! I CAN SAY NO MORE!


SO LONG AS THAT BATTLE CONTINUES OUTSIDE, YOU MUST REMAIN HERE! THAT IS ALL YOU MAY BE TOLD!

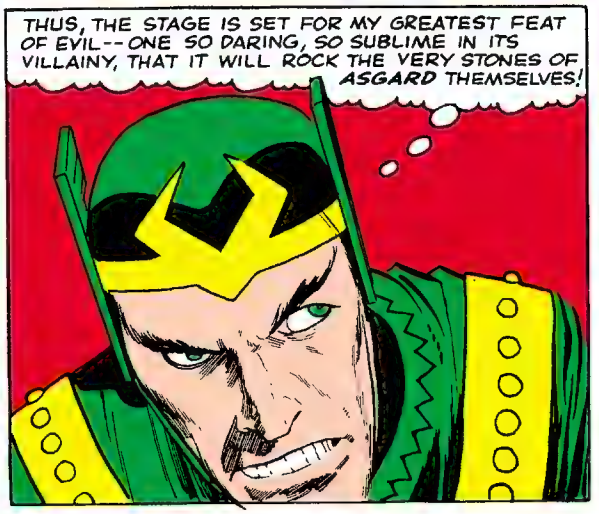

WAIT! AT LEAST TELL ME WHO YOU ARE--WHY YOU WEAR THAT DREADFUL HOOD??
NOT YET!
IT'S NO USE! HIS VOICE SOUNDS VAGUELY FAMILIAR, BUT I CAN'T IDENTIFY IT! I SIMPLY CAN'T!

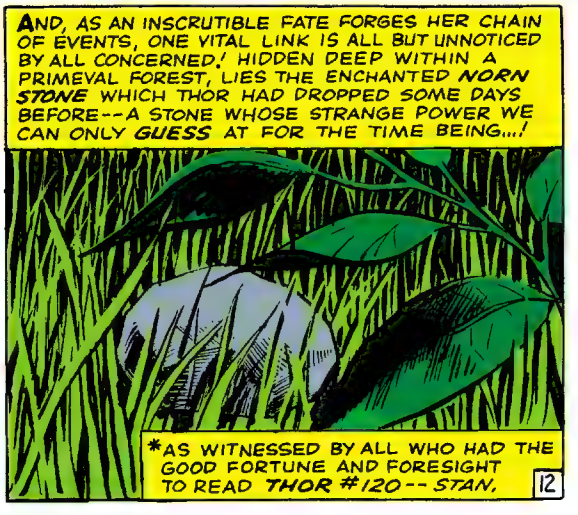

BUT, MANY ARE THE EVENTS WHICH DEPEND UPON THE OUTCOME OF THOR'S DESPERATE BATTLE,! IN FAR OFF ASGARD, LOKI USES A VISI-PROBE TO SEE BENEATH THE COLD STONE FLOOR...
NOW THAT I AM ALONE ONCE MORE, IT IS SAFE TO CONTINUE MY OWN SECRET ENDEAVERS...
I MUST BE CERTAIN THAT ULARIC, THE WARLOCK, STILL SLEEPS IN CAPTIVITY BELOW!

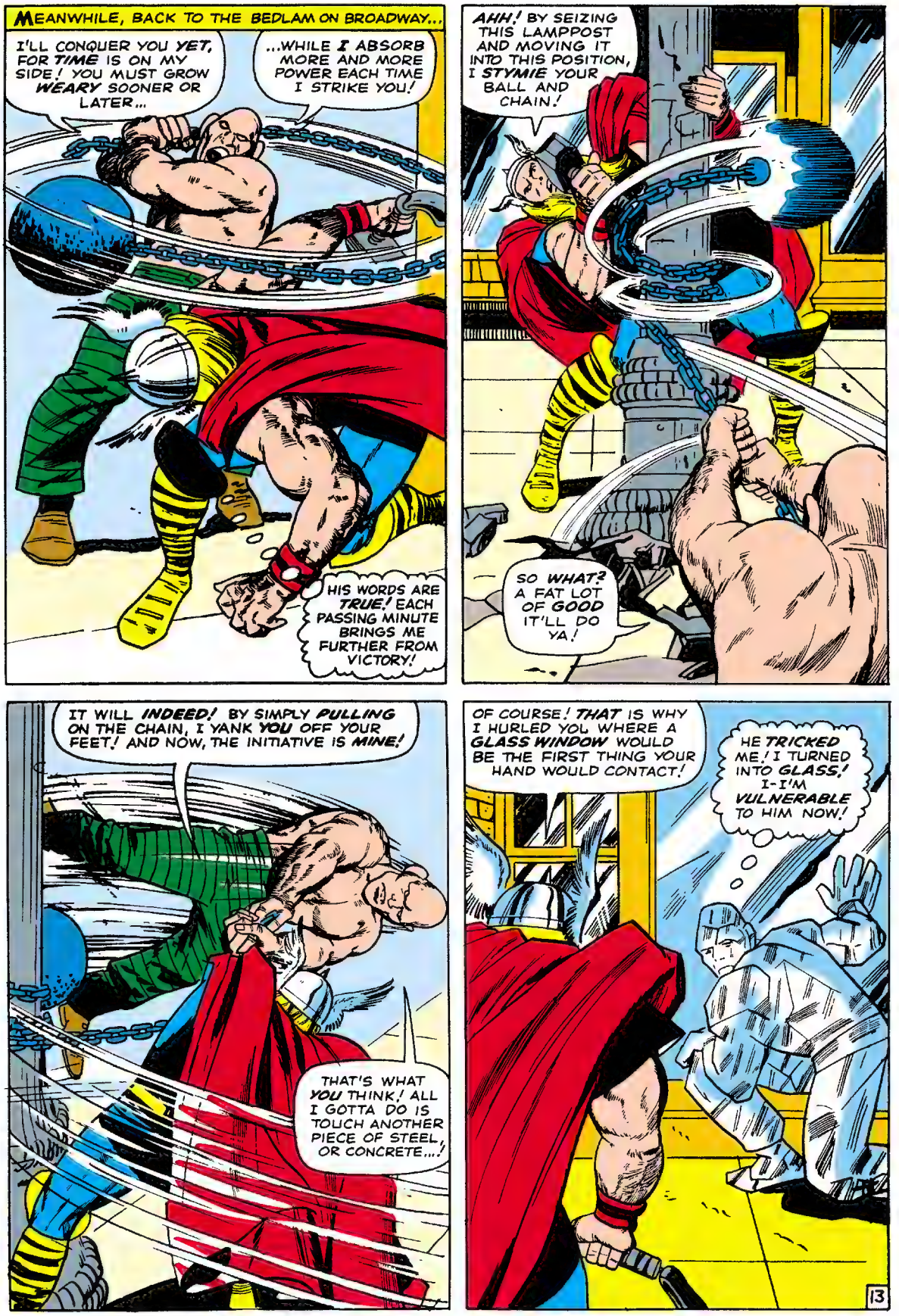

GOOD! HE STILL LIES HELPLESSLY WITHIN THE TIME CAPSULE, OBLIVIOUS TO ALL THAT TRANSPIRES!

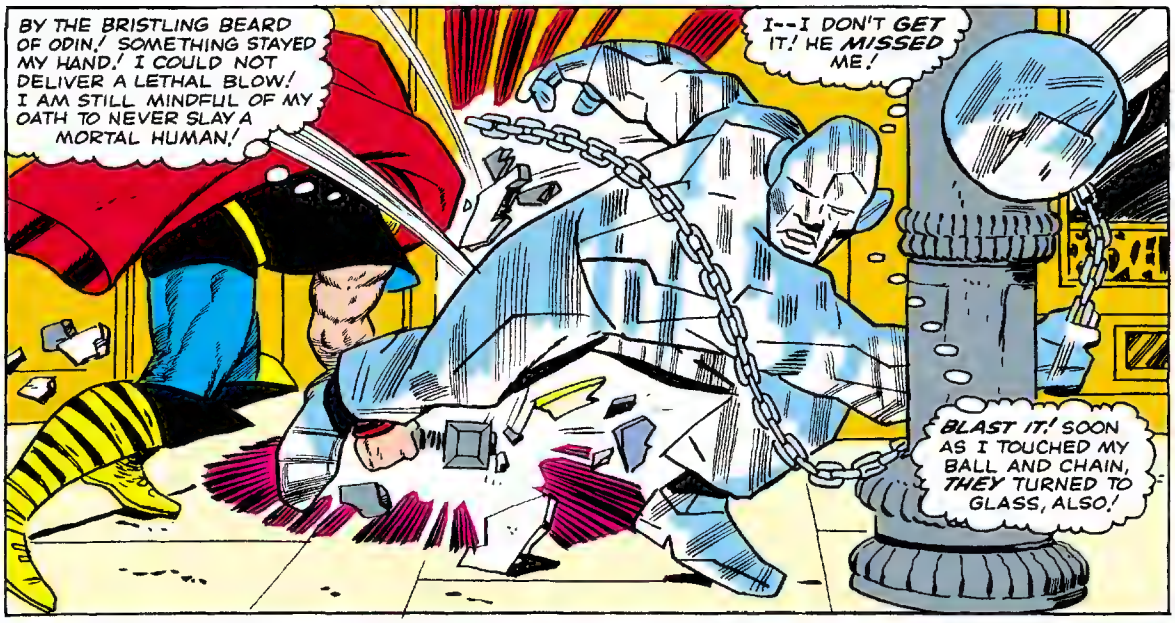

WHILST THE SICKENINGLY NOBLE BALDER BEGINS A ROUTINE PATROL OF ASGARD'S BORDERS... HENCE, I NEED NO LONGER CONCERN MYSELF WITH HIM!

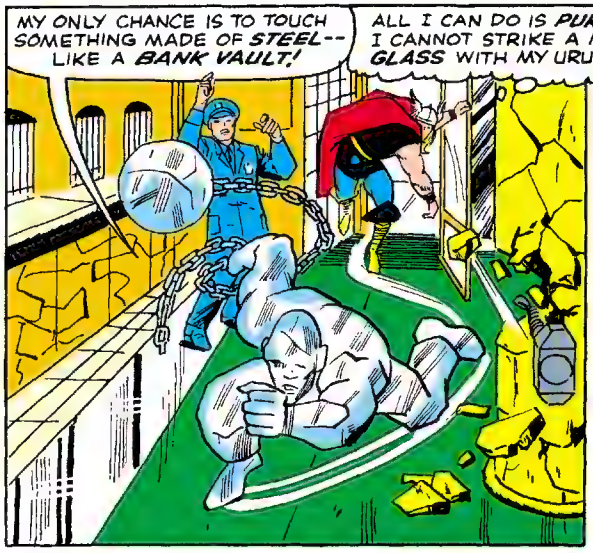
EVEN OMNIPOTENT ODIN, BELIEVING ALL TO BE TRANQUIL IN ASGARD, CONCERNS HIMSELF WITH SPORT AND GAMES, LITTLE DREAMING THAT LOKI IS FREE ONCE AGAIN!

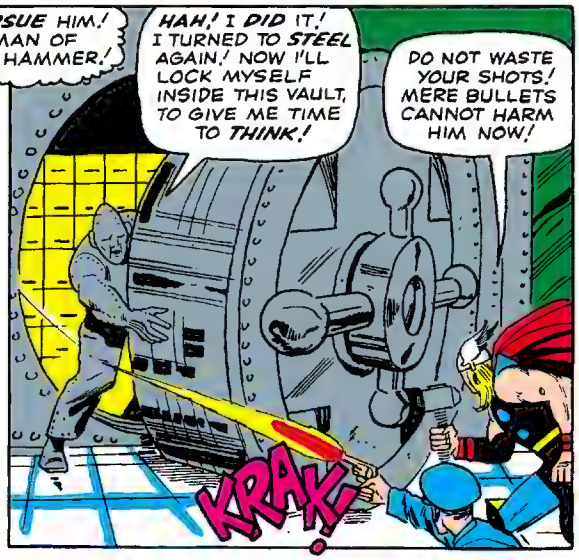

THUS, THE STAGE IS SET FOR MY GREATEST FEAT OF EVIL--ONE SO DARING, SO SUBLIME IN ITS VILLAINY, THAT IT WILL ROCK THE VERY STONES OF ASGARD THEMSELVES!

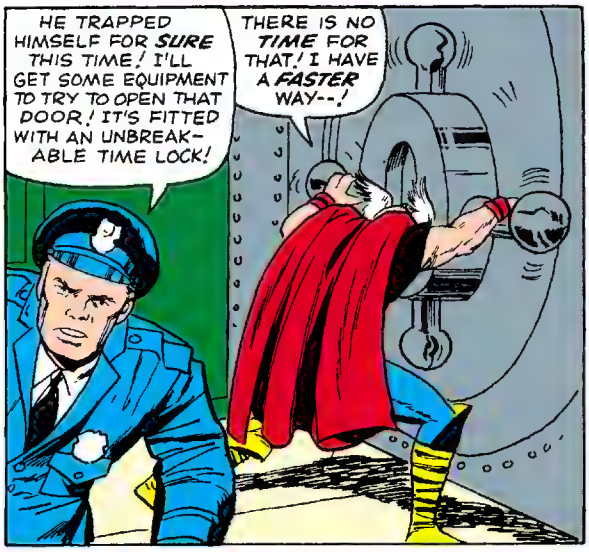

AND, AS AN INSCRUTIBLE FATE FORGES HER CHAIN OF EVENTS, ONE VITAL LINK IS ALL BUT UNNOTICED BY ALL CONCERNED,! HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN A PRIMEVAL FOREST, LIES THE ENCHANTED NORN STONE WHICH THOR HAD DROPPED SOME DAYS BEFORE--A STONE WHOSE STRANGE POWER WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT FOR THE TIME BEING...!
*AS WITNESSED BY ALL WHO HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE AND FORESIGHT TO READ THOR #120 -- STAN.

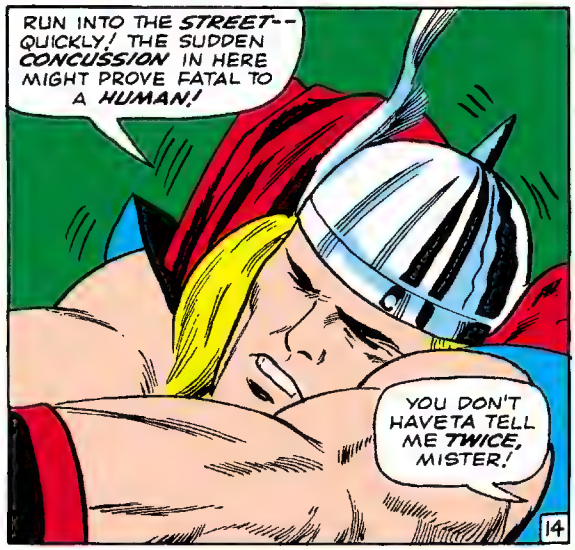

MEANWHILE, BACK TO THE BEDLAM ON BROADWAY...
I'LL CONQUER YOU YET, FOR TIME IS ON MY SIDE! YOU MUST GROW WEARY SOONER OR LATER...
...WHILE I ABSORB MORE AND MORE POWER EACH TIME I STRIKE YOU!
HIS WORDS ARE TRUE! EACH PASSING MINUTE BRINGS ME FURTHER FROM VICTORY!
AHH! BY SEIZING THIS LAMPPOST AND MOVING IT INTO THIS POSITION, I STYMIE YOUR BALL AND CHAIN!
SO WHAT? A FAT LOT OF GOOD IT'LL DO YA!
IT WILL INDEED! BY SIMPLY PULLING ON THE CHAIN, I YANK YOU OFF YOUR FEET! AND NOW, THE INITIATIVE IS MINE!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK! ALL I GOTTA DO IS TOUCH ANOTHER PIECE OF STEEL, OR CONCRETE...!
OF COURSE! THAT IS WHY I HURLED YOU WHERE A GLASS WINDOW WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOUR HAND WOULD CONTACT!
HE TRICKED ME! I TURNED INTO GLASS! I-I'M VULNERABLE TO HIM NOW!
13

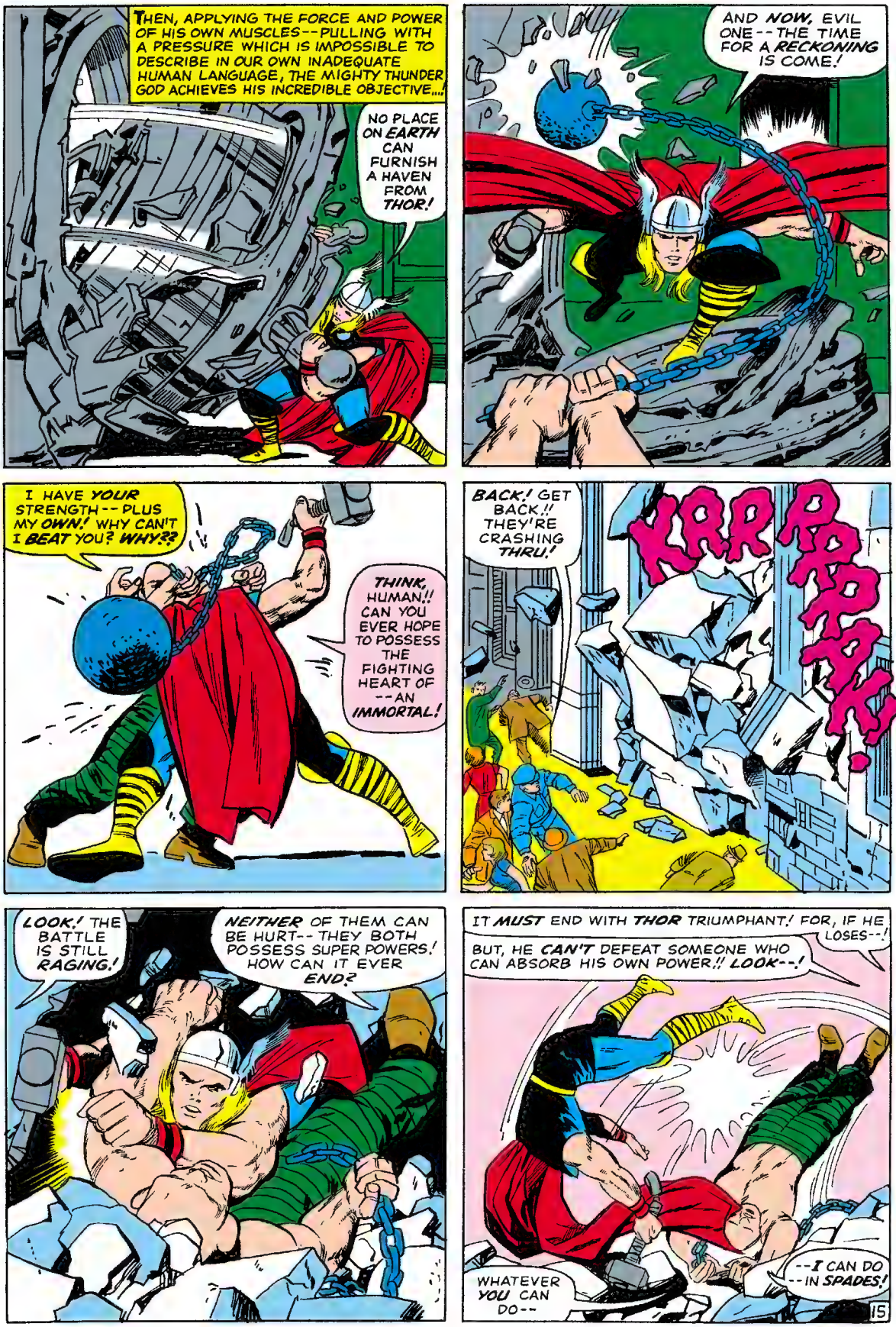

BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN! SOMETHING STAYED MY HAND! I COULD NOT DELIVER A LETHAL BLOW! I AM STILL MINDFUL OF MY OATH TO NEVER SLAY A MORTAL HUMAN!
I--I DON'T GET IT! HE MISSED ME!
BLAST IT! SOON AS I TOUCHED MY BALL AND CHAIN, THEY TURNED TO GLASS, ALSO!

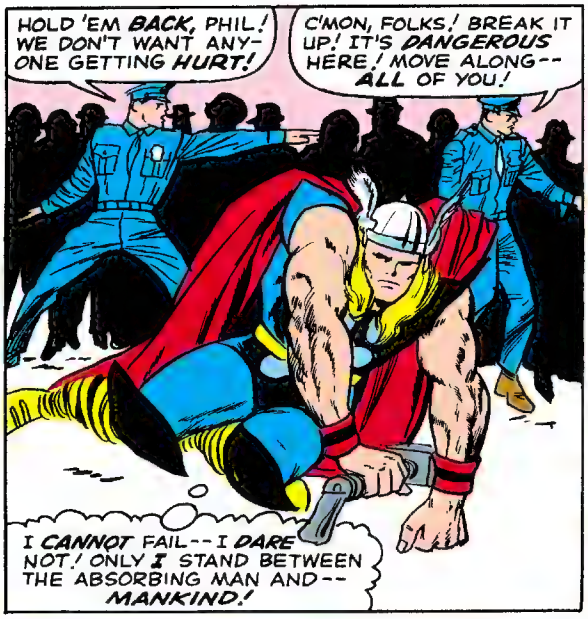

MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO TOUCH SOMETHING MADE OF STEEL-- LIKE A BANK VAULT!
ALL I CAN DO IS PURSUE HIM! I CANNOT STRIKE A MAN OF GLASS WITH MY URU HAMMER!

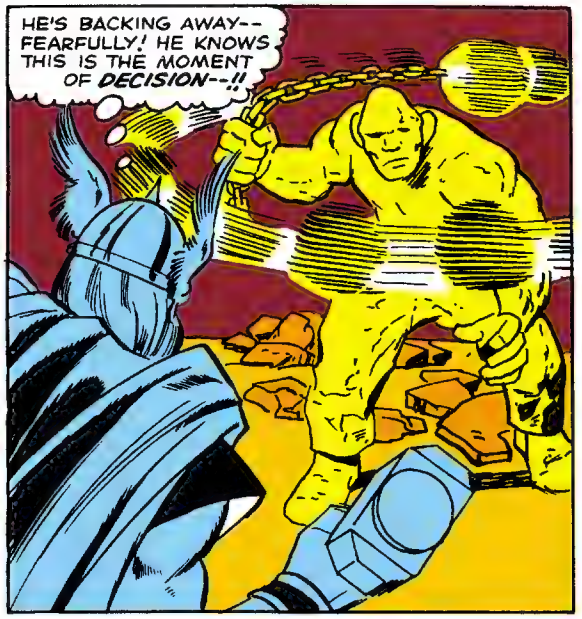

HAH! I DID IT! I TURNED TO STEEL AGAIN! NOW I'LL LOCK MYSELF INSIDE THIS VAULT, TO GIVE ME TIME TO THINK!
DO NOT WASTE YOUR SHOTS! MERE BULLETS CANNOT HARM HIM NOW!
KRAK!

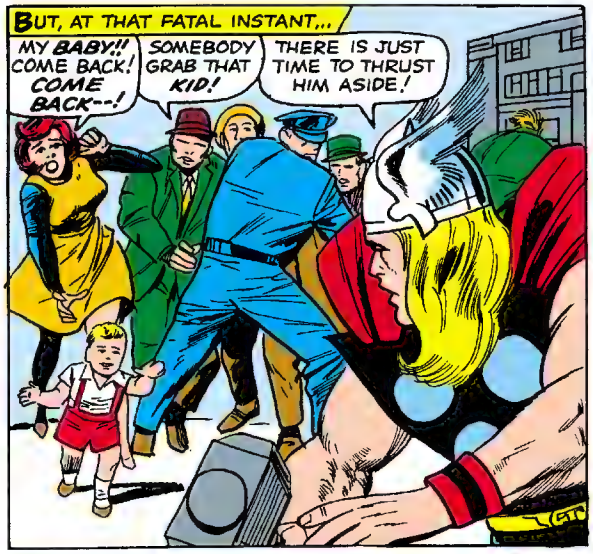

HE TRAPPED HIMSELF FOR SURE THIS TIME! I'LL GET SOME EQUIPMENT TO TRY TO OPEN THAT DOOR! IT'S FITTED WITH AN UNBREAK-ABLE TIME LOCK!
THERE IS NO TIME FOR THAT! I HAVE A FASTER WAY--!

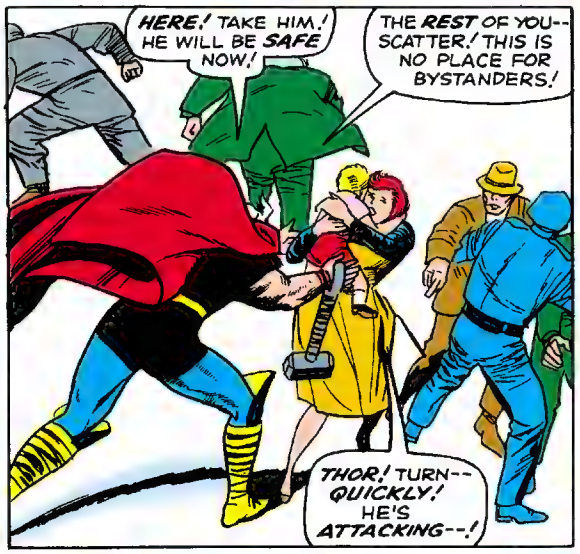

RUN INTO THE STREET-- QUICKLY! THE SUDDEN CONCUSSION IN HERE MIGHT PROVE FATAL TO A HUMAN!
YOU DON'T HAVETA TELL ME TWICE, MISTER!

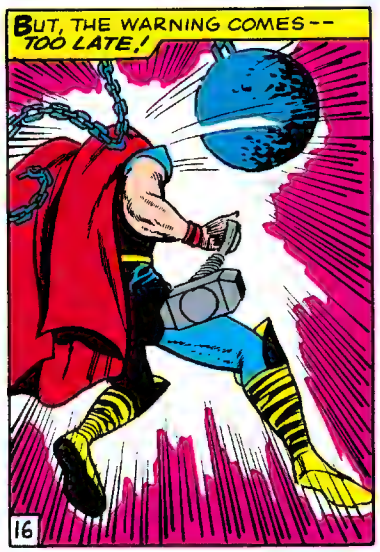

THEN, APPLYING THE FORCE AND POWER OF HIS OWN MUSCLES--PULLING WITH A PRESSURE WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE IN OUR OWN INADEQUATE HUMAN LANGUAGE, THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD ACHIEVES HIS INCREDIBLE OBJECTIVE...!
NO PLACE ON EARTH CAN FURNISH A HAVEN FROM THOR!
AND NOW, EVIL ONE--THE TIME FOR A RECKONING IS COME!
I HAVE YOUR STRENGTH--PLUS MY OWN! WHY CAN'T I BEAT YOU? WHY??
THINK, HUMAN!! CAN YOU EVER HOPE TO POSSESS THE FIGHTING HEART OF --AN IMMORTAL!
BACK! GET BACK!! THEY'RE CRASHING THRU!
KRRRRRK!
LOOK! THE BATTLE IS STILL RAGING!
NEITHER OF THEM CAN BE HURT--THEY BOTH POSSESS SUPER POWERS! HOW CAN IT EVER END?
IT MUST END WITH THOR TRIUMPHANT! FOR, IF HE LOSES--!
BUT, HE CAN'T DEFEAT SOMEONE WHO CAN ABSORB HIS OWN POWER!! LOOK--!
WHATEVER YOU CAN DO--
--I CAN DO --IN SPADES!
15

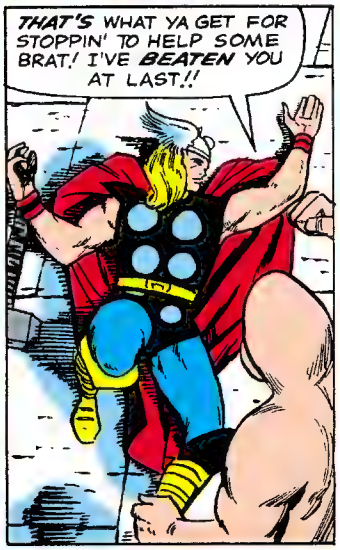

HOLD 'EM BACK, PHIL! WE DON'T WANT ANYONE GETTING HURT!
C'MON, FOLKS! BREAK IT UP! IT'S DANGEROUS HERE! MOVE ALONG--ALL OF YOU!
I CANNOT FAIL--I DARE NOT! ONLY I STAND BETWEEN THE ABSORBING MAN AND--MANKIND!

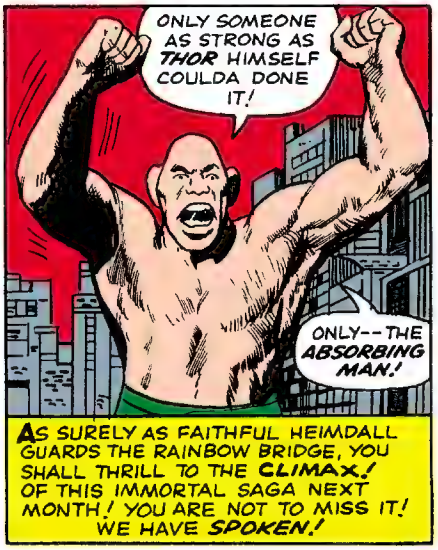

HE'S BACKING AWAY--FEARFULLY! HE KNOWS THIS IS THE MOMENT OF DECISION--!!

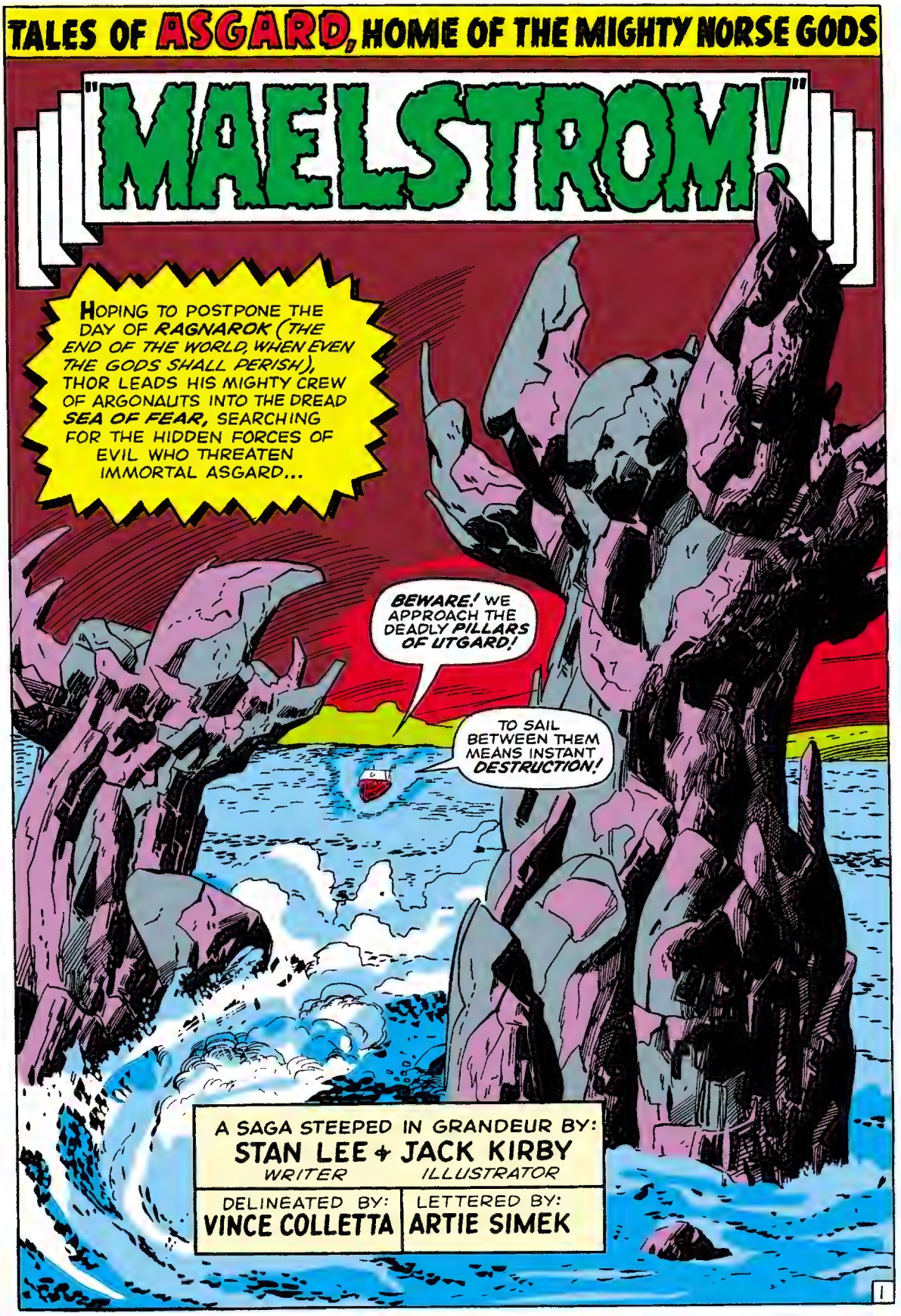

BUT, AT THAT FATAL INSTANT...
MY BABY!! COME BACK! COME BACK--!
SOMEBODY GRAB THAT KID!
THERE IS JUST TIME TO THRUST HIM ASIDE!

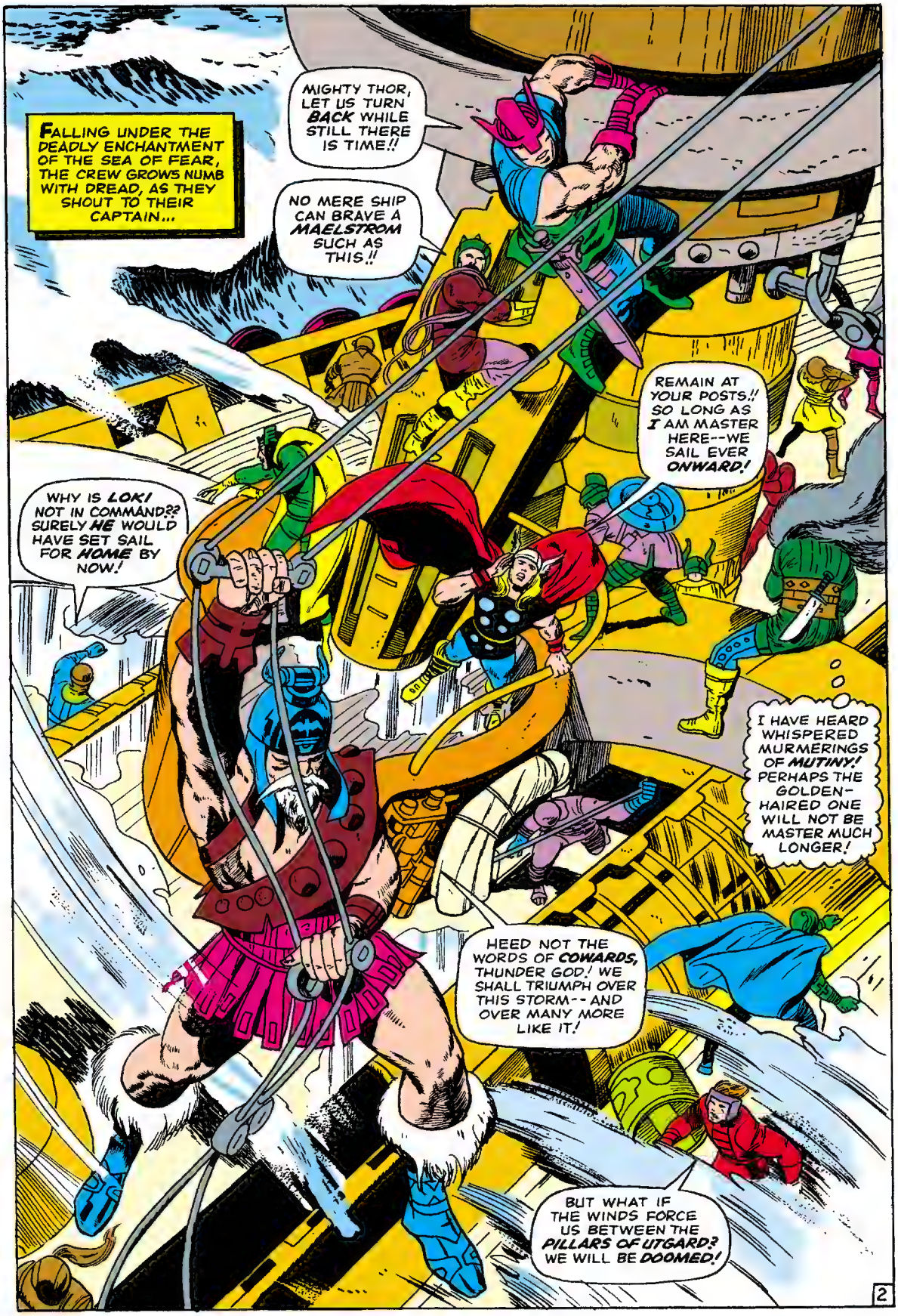

HERE! TAKE HIM! HE WILL BE SAFE NOW!
THE REST OF YOU--SCATTER! THIS IS NO PLACE FOR BYSTANDERS!
THOR! TURN--QUICKLY! HE'S ATTACKING--!

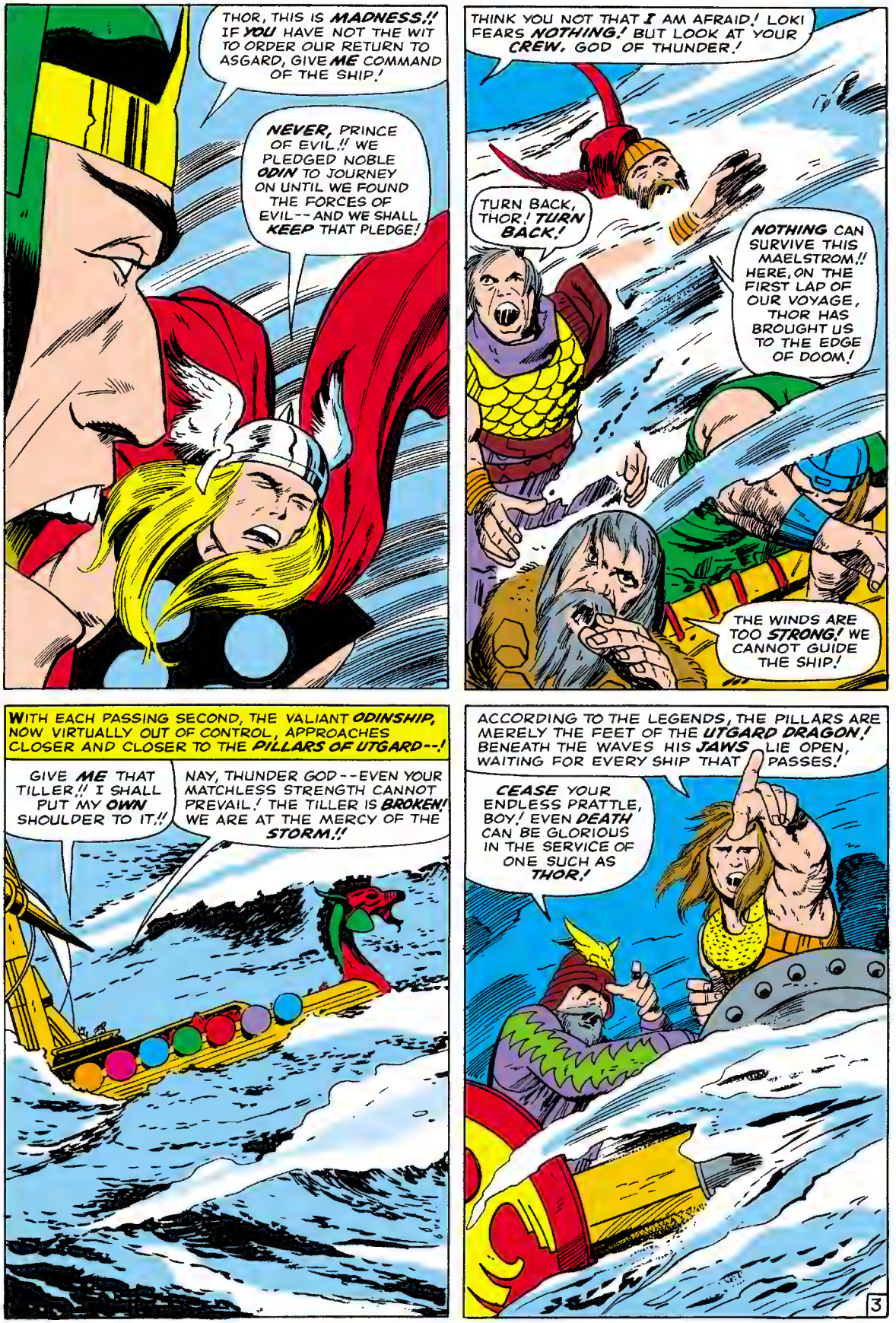

BUT, THE WARNING COMES--TOO LATE!

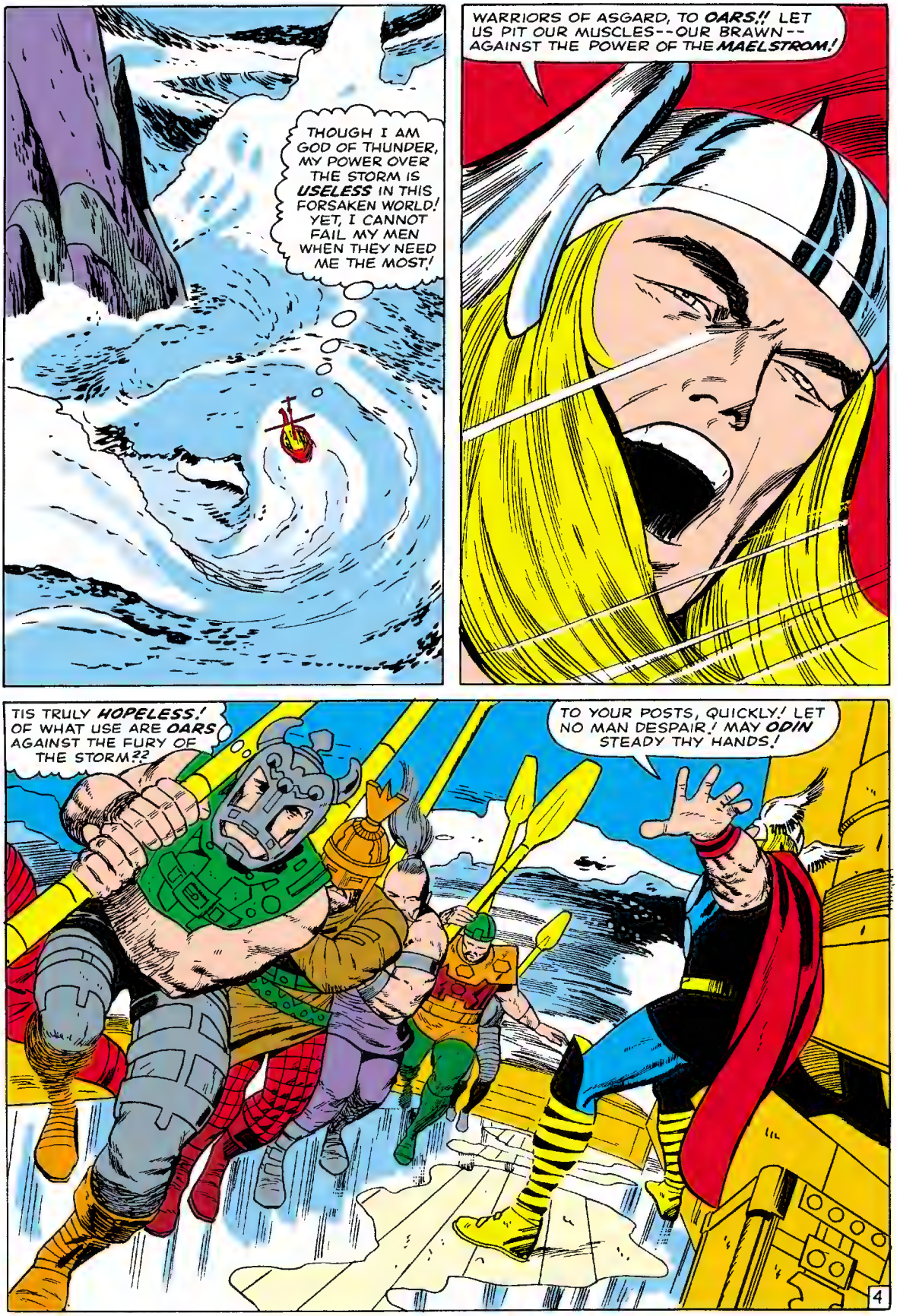

THAT'S WHAT YA GET FOR STOPPIN' TO HELP SOME BRAT! I'VE BEATEN YOU AT LAST!!

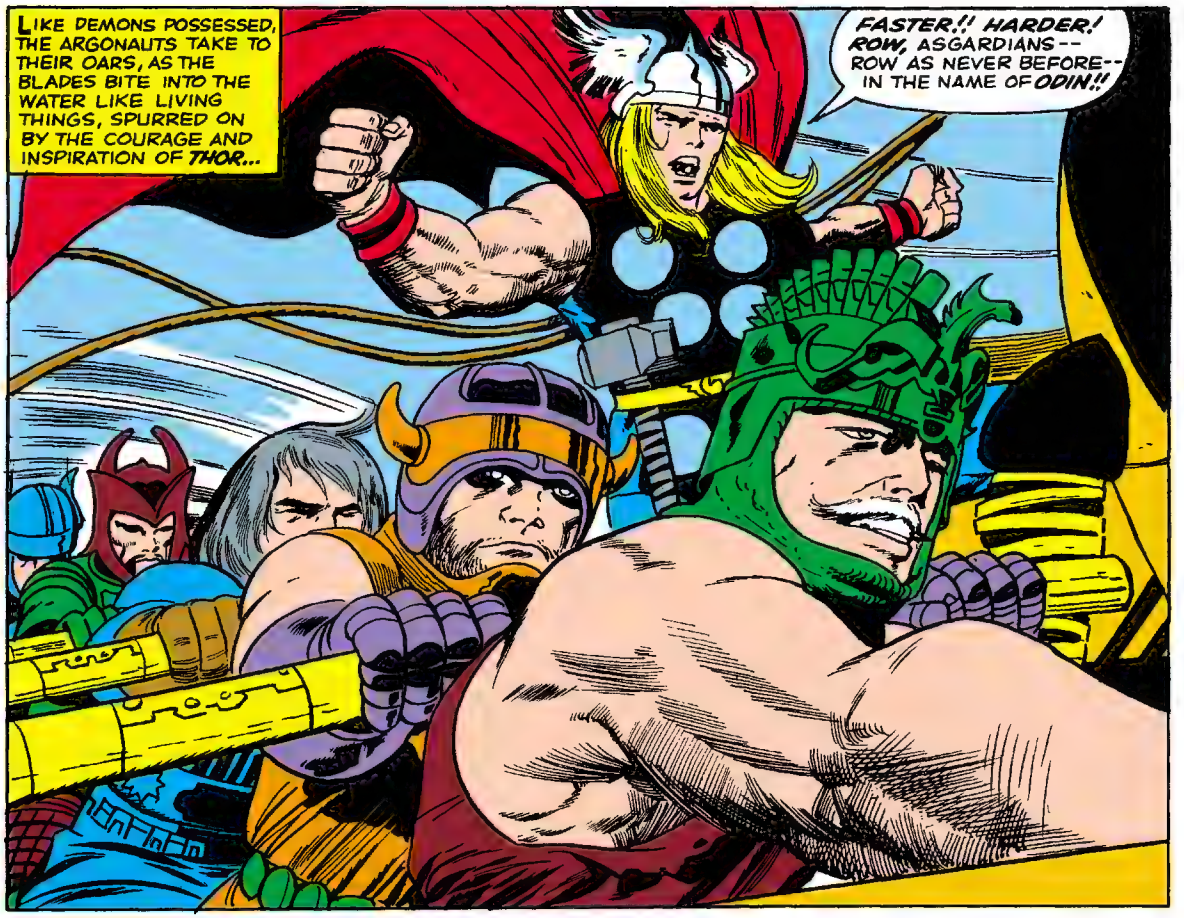

ONLY SOMEONE AS STRONG AS THOR HIMSELF COULDA DONE IT!
ONLY--THE ABSORBING MAN!
AS SURELY AS FAITHFUL HEIMDALL GUARDS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, YOU SHALL THRILL TO THE CLIMAX! OF THIS IMMORTAL SAGA NEXT MONTH! YOU ARE NOT TO MISS IT! WE HAVE SPOKEN!

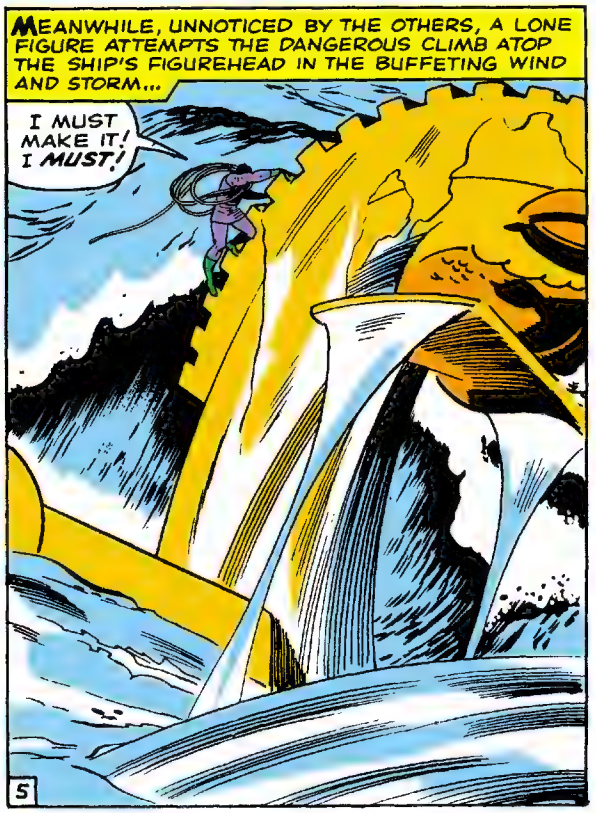

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS
"MAELSTROM!"
HOPING TO POSTPONE THE DAY OF RAGNAROK (THE END OF THE WORLD, WHEN EVEN THE GODS SHALL PERISH), THOR LEADS HIS MIGHTY CREW OF ARGONAUTS INTO THE DREAD SEA OF FEAR, SEARCHING FOR THE HIDDEN FORCES OF EVIL WHO THREATEN IMMORTAL ASGARD...
BEWARE! WE APPROACH THE DEADLY PILLARS OF UTGARD!
TO SAIL BETWEEN THEM MEANS INSTANT DESTRUCTION!
A SAGA STEEPED IN GRANDEUR BY:
STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY
WRITER ILLUSTRATOR
DELINEATED BY: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
1

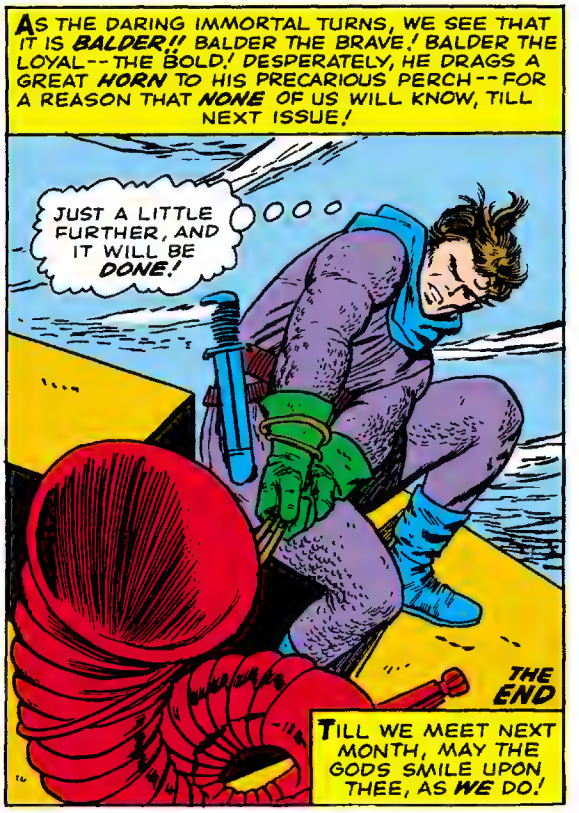

FALLING UNDER THE DEADLY ENCHANTMENT OF THE SEA OF FEAR, THE CREW GROWS NUMB WITH DREAD, AS THEY SHOUT TO THEIR CAPTAIN...
MIGHTY THOR, LET US TURN BACK WHILE STILL THERE IS TIME!!
NO MERE SHIP CAN BRAVE A MAELSTROM SUCH AS THIS!!
REMAIN AT YOUR POSTS!! SO LONG AS I AM MASTER HERE--WE SAIL EVER ONWARD!
WHY IS LOKI NOT IN COMMAND?? SURELY HE WOULD HAVE SET SAIL FOR HOME BY NOW!
I HAVE HEARD WHISPERED MURMERINGS OF MUTINY! PERHAPS THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE WILL NOT BE MASTER MUCH LONGER!
HEED NOT THE WORDS OF COWARDS, THUNDER GOD! WE SHALL TRIUMPH OVER THIS STORM--AND OVER MANY MORE LIKE IT!
BUT WHAT IF THE WINDS FORCE US BETWEEN THE PILLARS OF UTGARD? WE WILL BE DOOMED!


THOR, THIS IS MADNESS!! IF YOU HAVE NOT THE WIT TO ORDER OUR RETURN TO ASGARD, GIVE ME COMMAND OF THE SHIP!
NEVER, PRINCE OF EVIL!! WE PLEDGED NOBLE ODIN TO JOURNEY ON UNTIL WE FOUND THE FORCES OF EVIL--AND WE SHALL KEEP THAT PLEDGE!
THINK YOU NOT THAT I AM AFRAID! LOKI FEARS NOTHING! BUT LOOK AT YOUR CREW, GOD OF THUNDER!
TURN BACK, THOR! TURN BACK!
NOTHING CAN SURVIVE THIS MAELSTROM!! HERE, ON THE FIRST LAP OF OUR VOYAGE, THOR HAS BROUGHT US TO THE EDGE OF DOOM!
THE WINDS ARE TOO STRONG! WE CANNOT GUIDE THE SHIP!
WITH EACH PASSING SECOND, THE VALIANT ODINSHIP, NOW VIRTUALLY OUT OF CONTROL, APPROACHES CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE PILLARS OF UTGARD--!
GIVE ME THAT TILLER!! I SHALL PUT MY OWN SHOULDER TO IT!!
NAY, THUNDER GOD--EVEN YOUR MATCHLESS STRENGTH CANNOT PREVAIL! THE TILLER IS BROKEN! WE ARE AT THE MERCY OF THE STORM!!
ACCORDING TO THE LEGENDS, THE PILLARS ARE MERELY THE FEET OF THE UTGARD DRAGON! BENEATH THE WAVES HIS JAWS LIE OPEN, WAITING FOR EVERY SHIP THAT PASSES!
CEASE YOUR ENDLESS PRATTLE, BOY! EVEN DEATH CAN BE GLORIOUS IN THE SERVICE OF ONE SUCH AS THOR!
3


THOUGH I AM GOD OF THUNDER, MY POWER OVER THE STORM IS USELESS IN THIS FORSAKEN WORLD! YET, I CANNOT FAIL MY MEN WHEN THEY NEED ME THE MOST!
WARRIORS OF ASGARD, TO OARS!! LET US PIT OUR MUSCLES--OUR BRAWN-- AGAINST THE POWER OF THE MAELSTROM!
TIS TRULY HOPELESS! OF WHAT USE ARE OARS AGAINST THE FURY OF THE STORM??
TO YOUR POSTS, QUICKLY! LET NO MAN DESPAIR! MAY ODIN STEADY THY HANDS!
4


LIKE DEMONS POSSESSED, THE ARGONAUTS TAKE TO THEIR OARS, AS THE BLADES BITE INTO THE WATER LIKE LIVING THINGS, SPURRED ON BY THE COURAGE AND INSPIRATION OF THOR...
FASTER!! HARDER! ROW, ASGARDIANS -- ROW AS NEVER BEFORE -- IN THE NAME OF ODIN!!

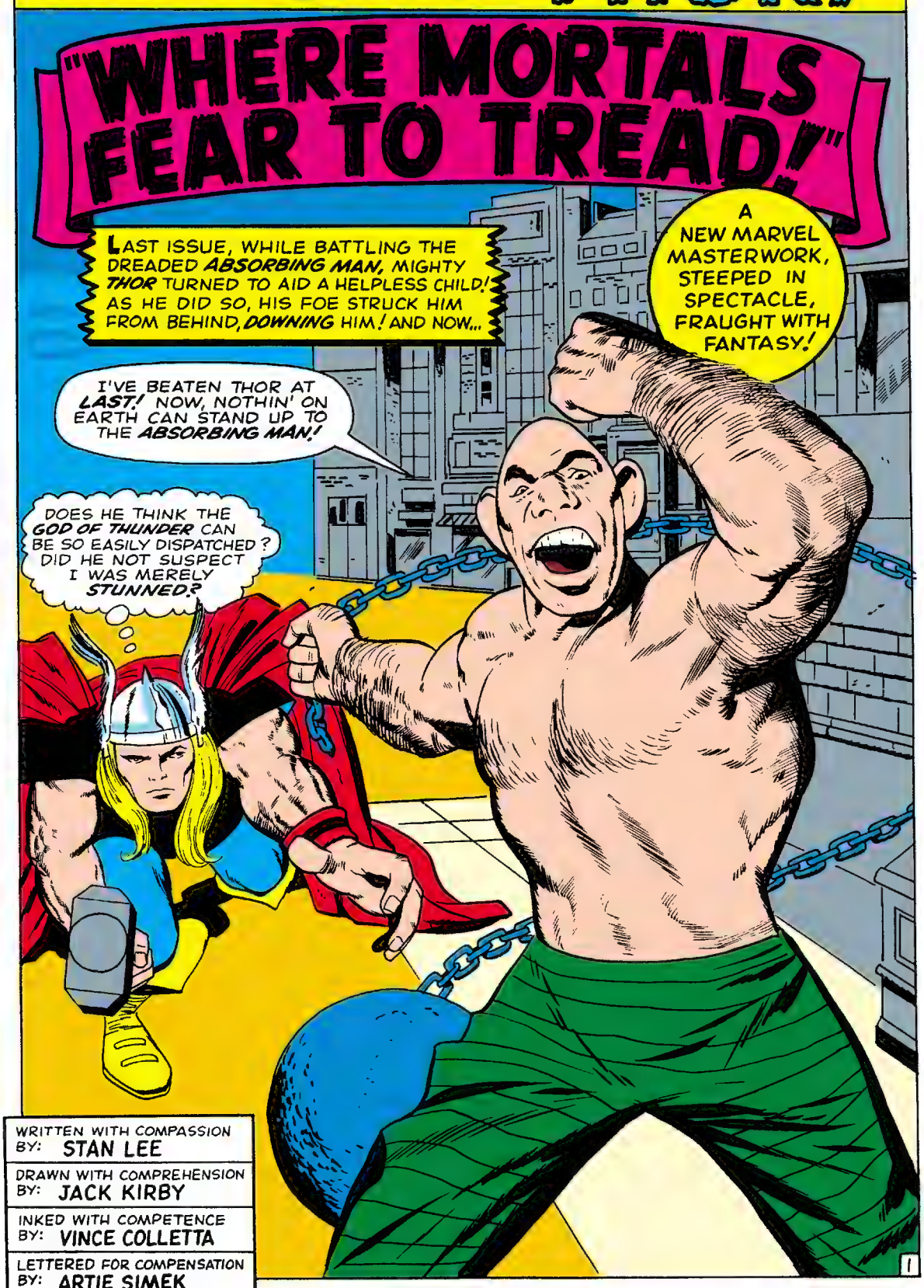

MEANWHILE, UNNOTICED BY THE OTHERS, A LONE FIGURE ATTEMPTS THE DANGEROUS CLIMB ATOP THE SHIP'S FIGUREHEAD IN THE BUFFETING WIND AND STORM...
I MUST MAKE IT! I MUST!
5


AS THE DARING IMMORTAL TURNS, WE SEE THAT IT IS BALDER!! BALDER THE BRAVE! BALDER THE LOYAL -- THE BOLD! DESPERATELY, HE DRAGS A GREAT HORN TO HIS PRECARIOUS PERCH -- FOR A REASON THAT NONE OF US WILL KNOW, TILL NEXT ISSUE!
JUST A LITTLE FURTHER, AND IT WILL BE DONE!
THE END
TILL WE MEET NEXT MONTH, MAY THE GODS SMILE UPON THEE, AS WE DO!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
122
NOV
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL POP ART PRODUCTIONS
12¢
"WHERE MORTALS FEAR TO TREAD!"

THE MIGHTY THOR!

"WHERE MORTALS FEAR TO TREAD!"

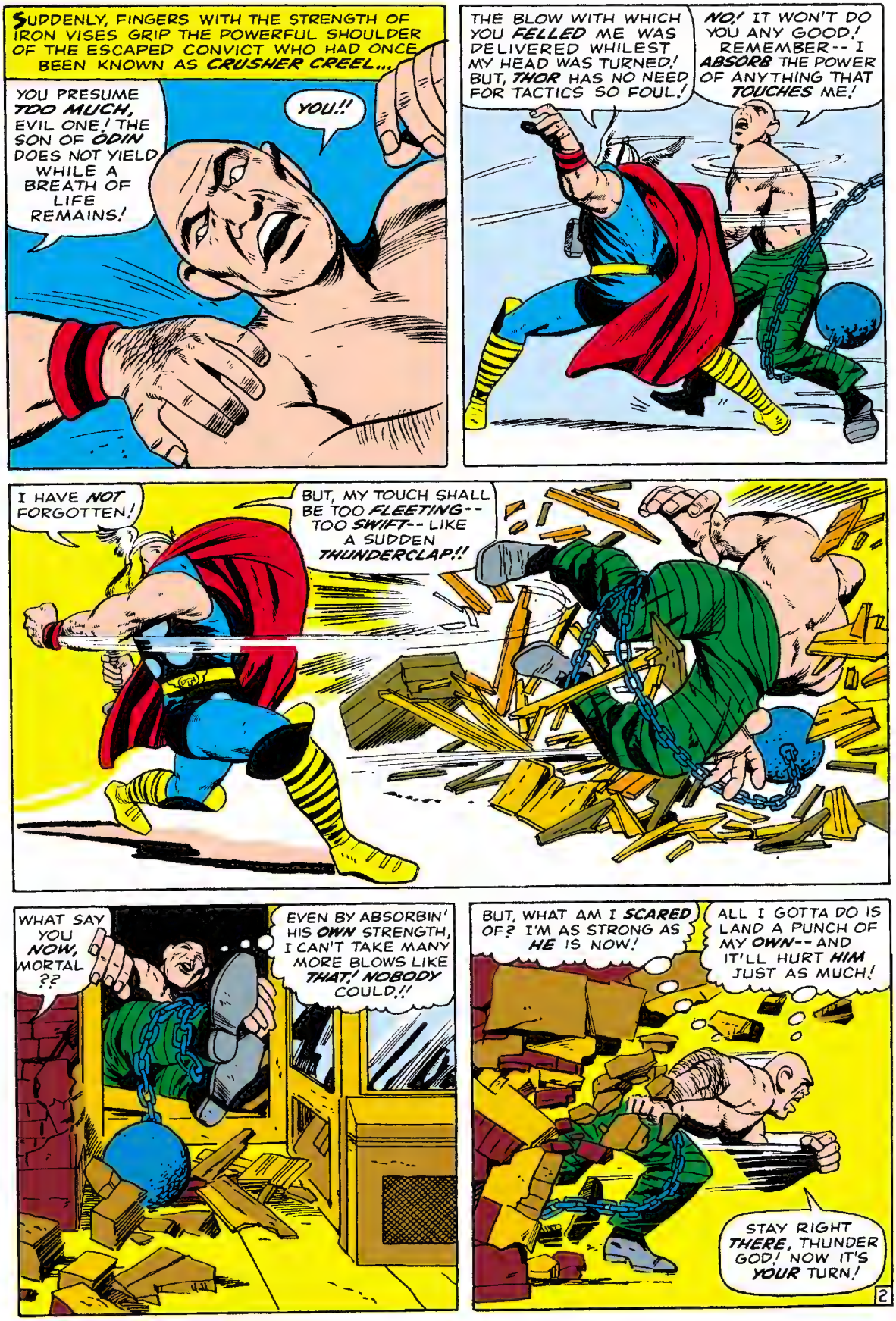

LAST ISSUE, WHILE BATTLING THE DREADED ABSORBING MAN, MIGHTY THOR TURNED TO AID A HELPLESS CHILD! AS HE DID SO, HIS FOE STRUCK HIM FROM BEHIND, DOWNING HIM! AND NOW...
A NEW MARVEL MASTERWORK, STEEPED IN SPECTACLE, FRAUGHT WITH FANTASY!
I'VE BEATEN THOR AT LAST! NOW, NOTHIN' ON EARTH CAN STAND UP TO THE ABSORBING MAN!
DOES HE THINK THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN BE SO EASILY DISPATCHED? DID HE NOT SUSPECT I WAS MERELY STUNNED?

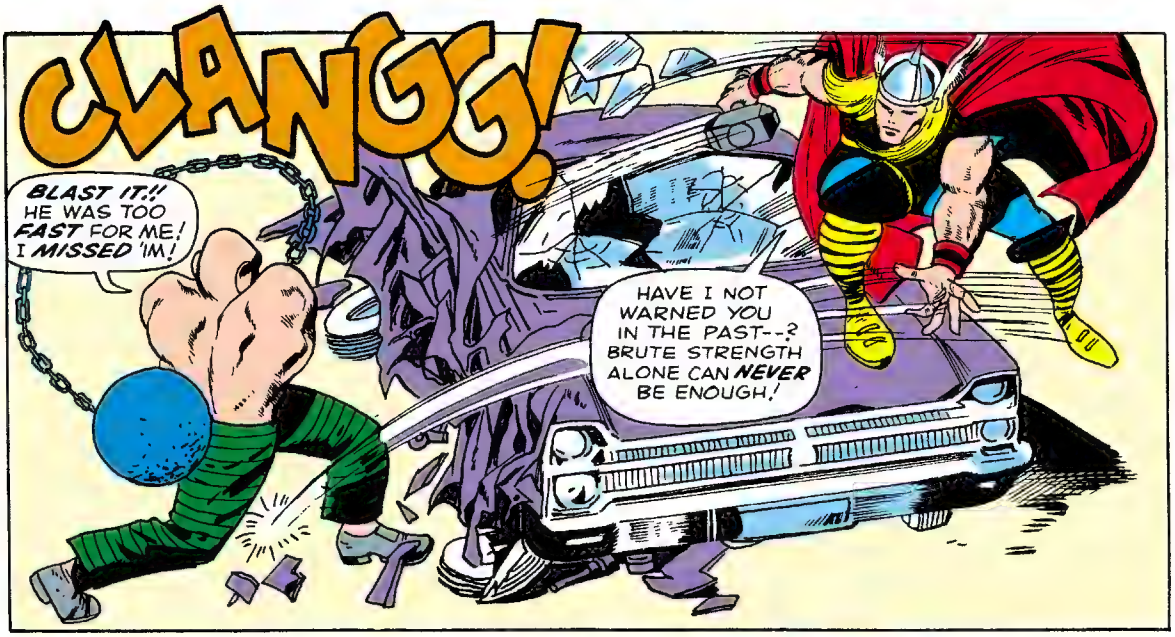
WRITTEN WITH COMPASSION BY: STAN LEE

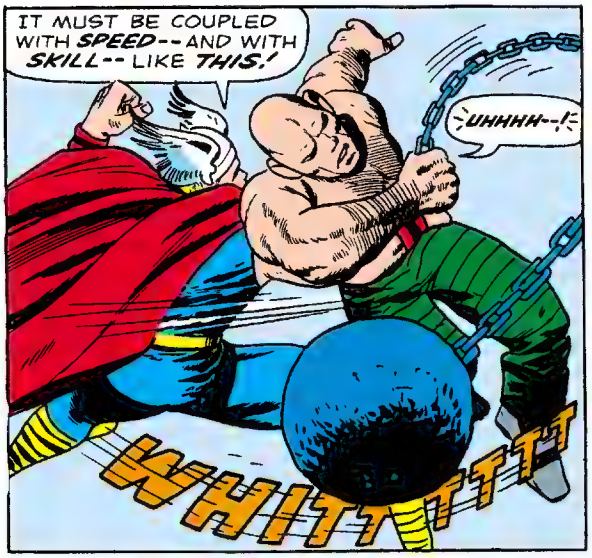
DRAWN WITH COMPREHENSION BY: JACK KIRBY

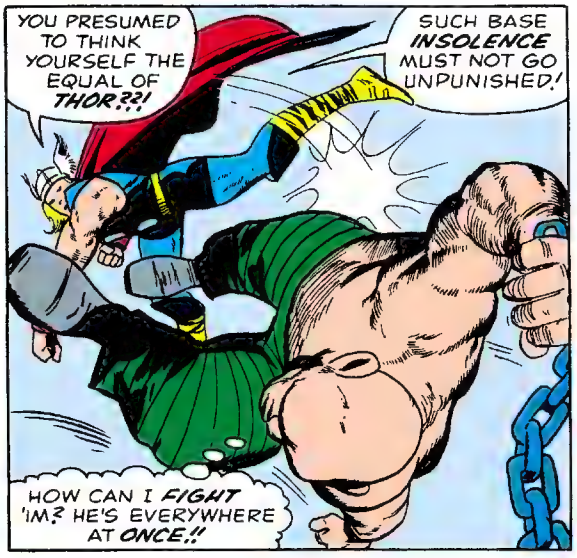
INKED WITH COMPETENCE BY: VINCE COLLETTA

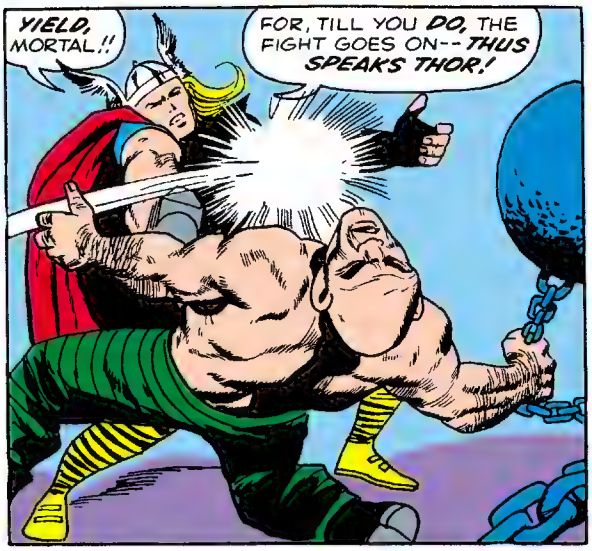
LETTERED FOR COMPENSATION BY: ARTIE SIMEK

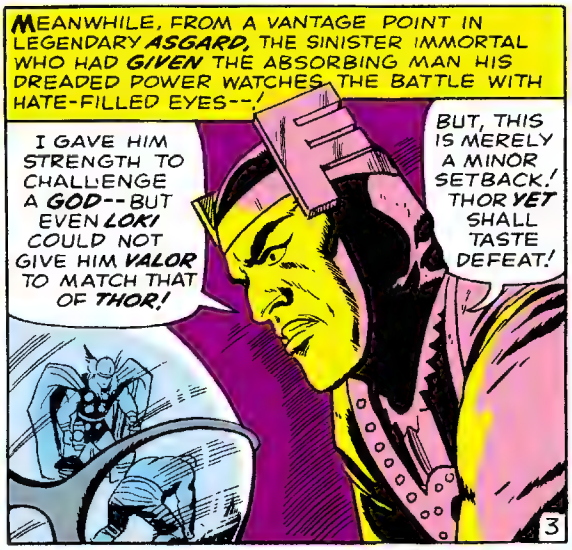

SUDDENLY, FINGERS WITH THE STRENGTH OF IRON VISES GRIP THE POWERFUL SHOULDER OF THE ESCAPED CONVICT WHO HAD ONCE BEEN KNOWN AS CRUSHER CREEL...
YOU PRESUME TOO MUCH, EVIL ONE! THE SON OF ODIN DOES NOT YIELD WHILE A BREATH OF LIFE REMAINS!
YOU!!
THE BLOW WITH WHICH YOU FELLED ME WAS DELIVERED WHILEST MY HEAD WAS TURNED! BUT, THOR HAS NO NEED FOR TACTICS SO FOUL!
NO! IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD! REMEMBER-- I ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYTHING THAT TOUCHES ME!
I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN!
BUT, MY TOUCH SHALL BE TOO FLEETING-- TOO SWIFT-- LIKE A SUDDEN THUNDERCLAP!!
WHAT SAY YOU NOW, MORTAL ??
EVEN BY ABSORBIN' HIS OWN STRENGTH, I CAN'T TAKE MANY MORE BLOWS LIKE THAT! NOBODY COULD!!
BUT, WHAT AM I SCARED OF? I'M AS STRONG AS HE IS NOW!
ALL I GOTTA DO IS LAND A PUNCH OF MY OWN-- AND IT'LL HURT HIM JUST AS MUCH!
STAY RIGHT THERE, THUNDER GOD! NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!
2

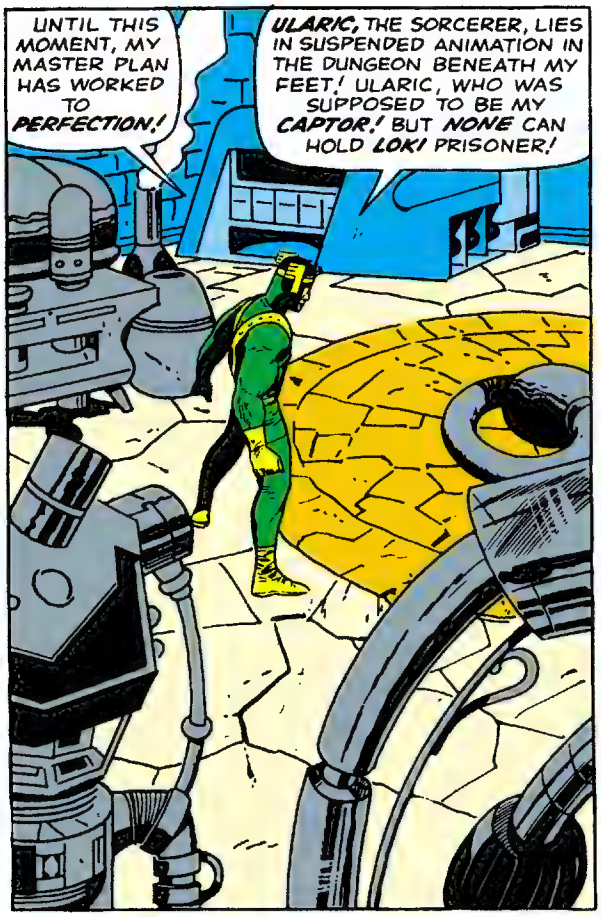

CLANGG!
BLAST IT!! HE WAS TOO FAST FOR ME! I MISSED 'IM!
HAVE I NOT WARNED YOU IN THE PAST--? BRUTE STRENGTH ALONE CAN NEVER BE ENOUGH!

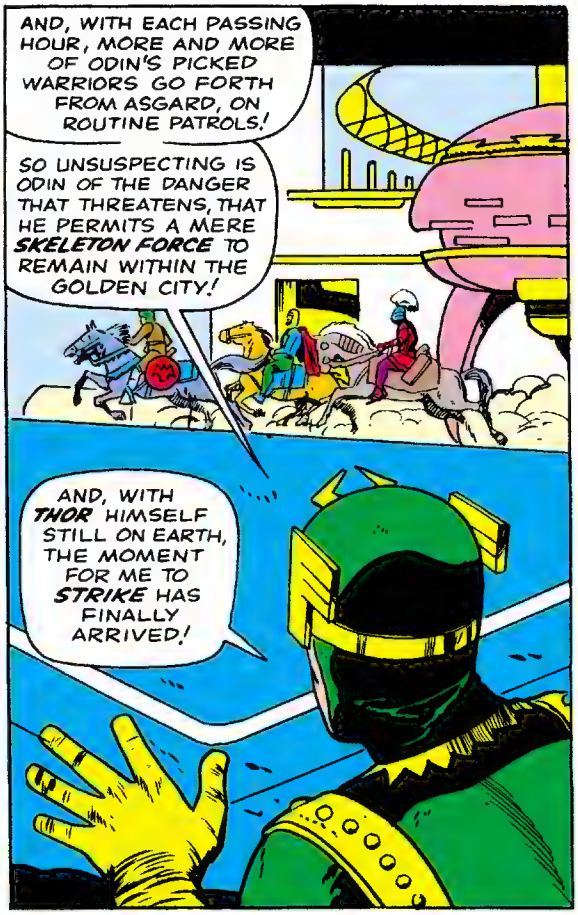

IT MUST BE COUPLED WITH SPEED-- AND WITH SKILL-- LIKE THIS!
UHHHH--!
WHITTTTT

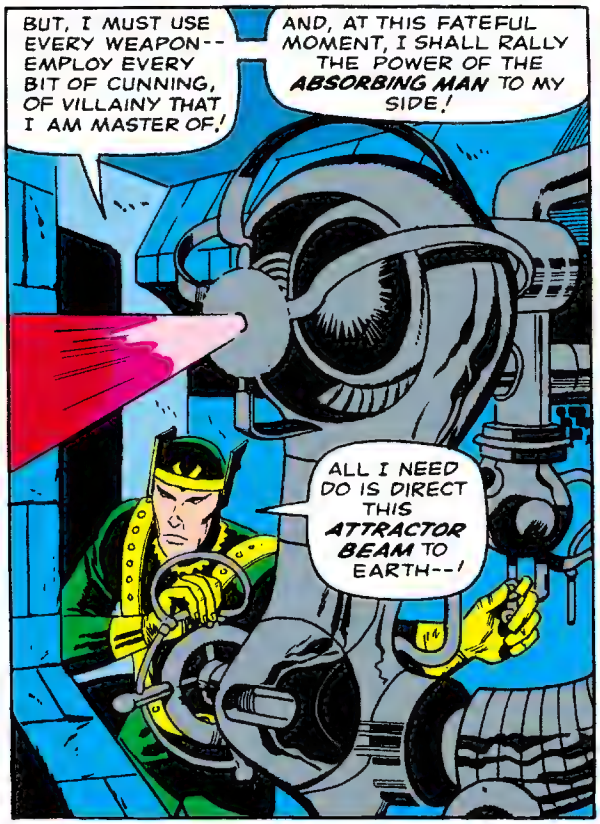

YOU PRESUMED TO THINK YOURSELF THE EQUAL OF THOR?!
SUCH BASE INSOLENCE MUST NOT GO UNPUNISHED!
HOW CAN I FIGHT 'IM? HE'S EVERYWHERE AT ONCE!!

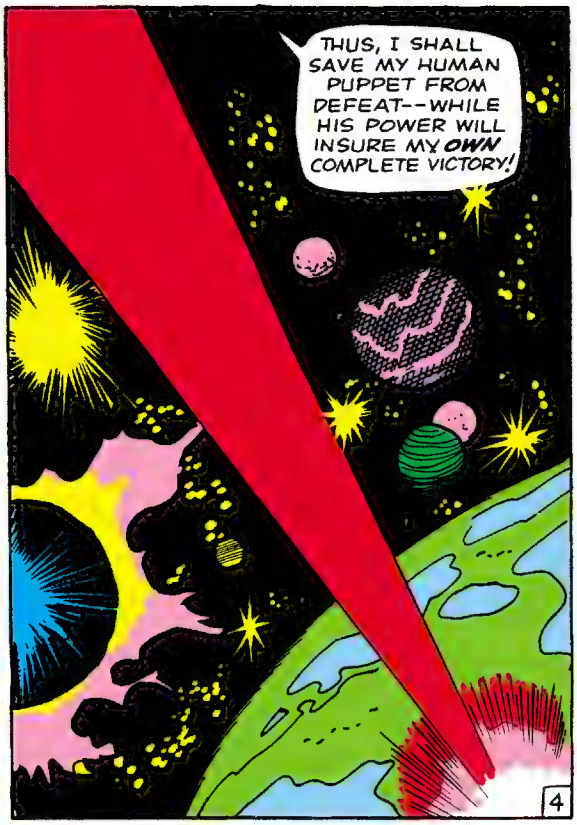

YIELD, MORTAL!!
FOR, TILL YOU DO, THE FIGHT GOES ON-- THUS SPEAKS THOR!


MEANWHILE, FROM A VANTAGE POINT IN LEGENDARY ASGARD, THE SINISTER IMMORTAL WHO HAD GIVEN THE ABSORBING MAN HIS DREADED POWER WATCHES THE BATTLE WITH HATE-FILLED EYES--!
I GAVE HIM STRENGTH TO CHALLENGE A GOD-- BUT EVEN LOKI COULD NOT GIVE HIM VALOR TO MATCH THAT OF THOR!
BUT, THIS IS MERELY A MINOR SETBACK! THOR YET SHALL TASTE DEFEAT!

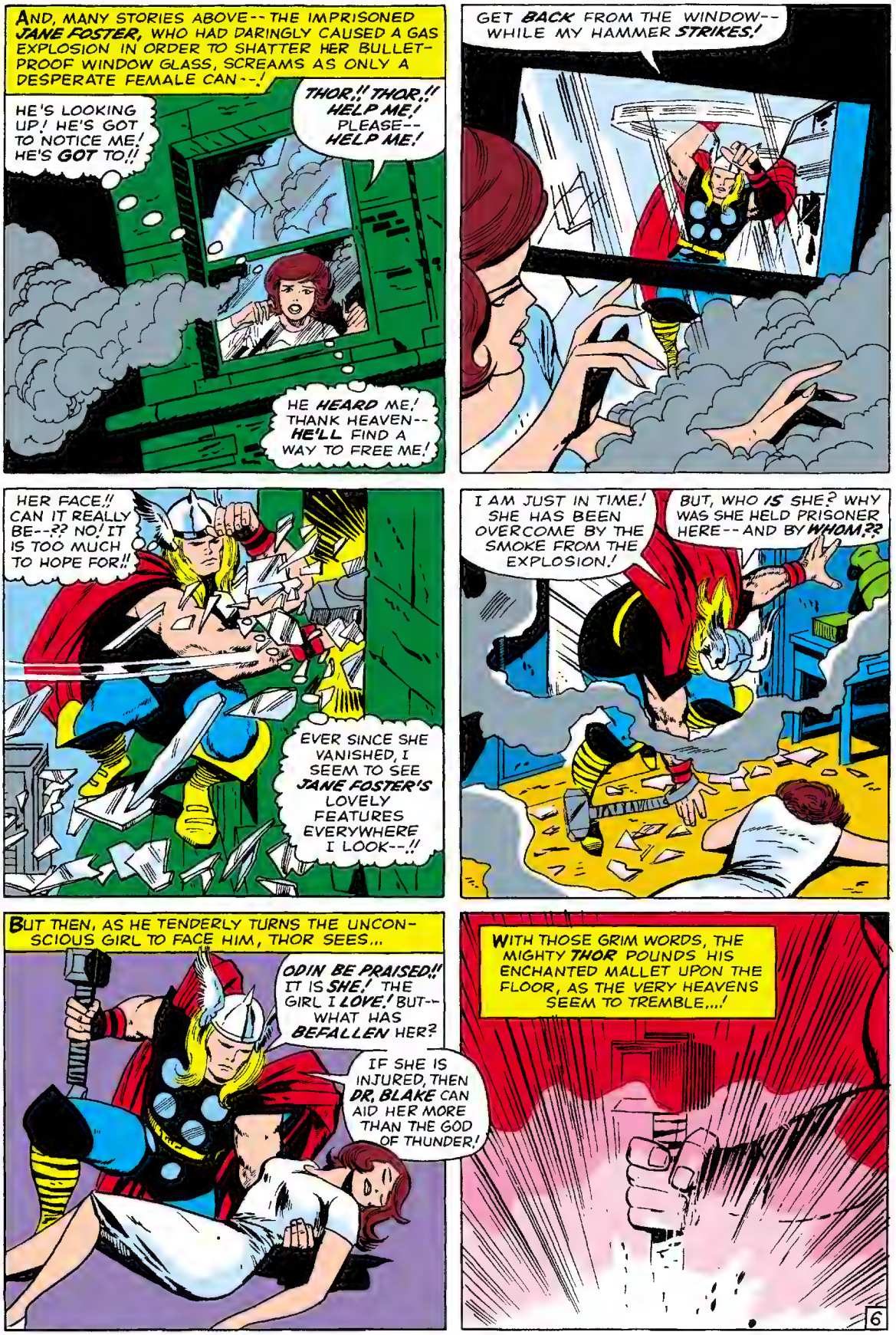

UNTIL THIS MOMENT, MY MASTER PLAN HAS WORKED TO PERFECTION!
ULARIC, THE SORCERER, LIES IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION IN THE DUNGEON BENEATH MY FEET! ULARIC, WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MY CAPTOR! BUT NONE CAN HOLD LOKI PRISONER!

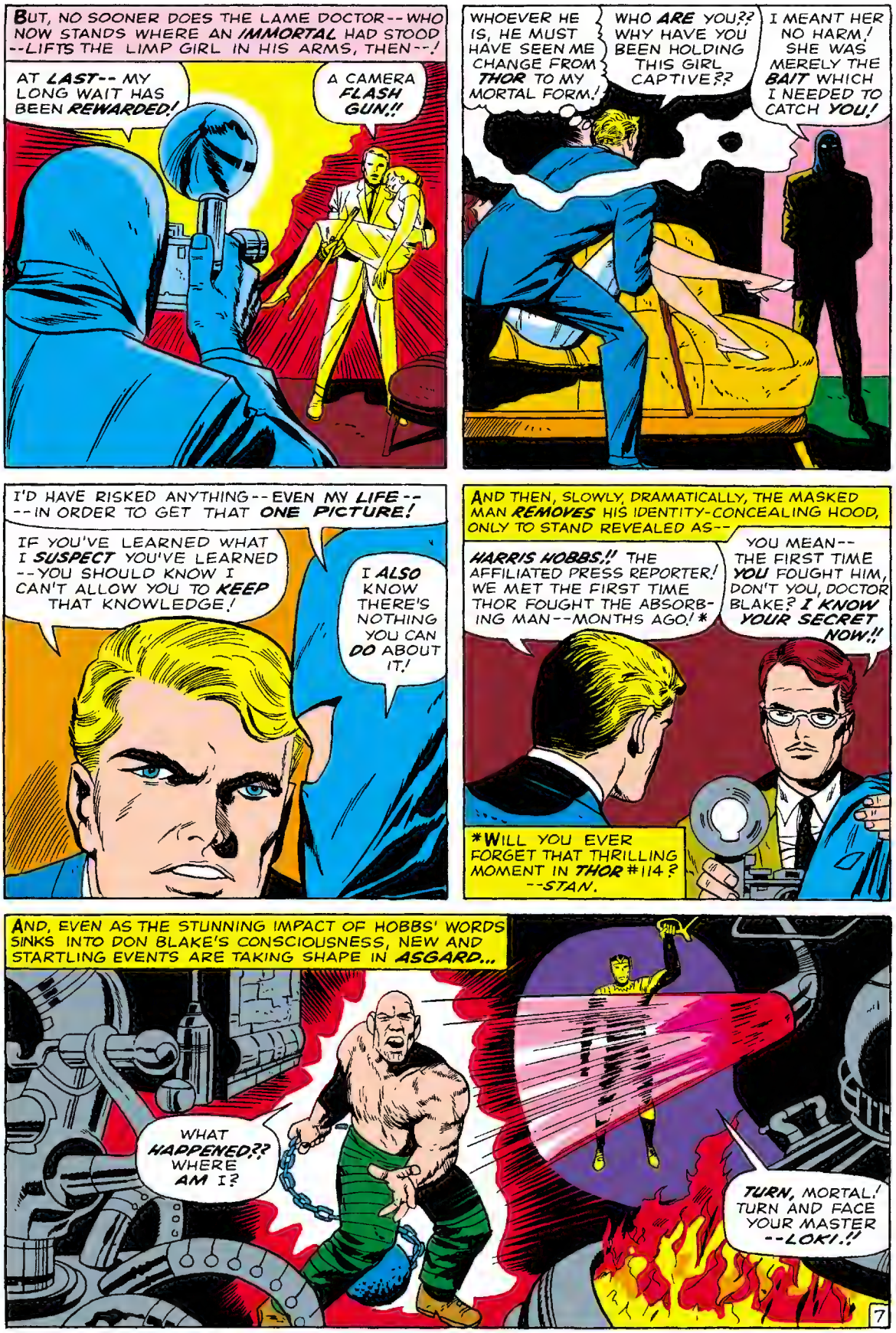

AND, WITH EACH PASSING HOUR, MORE AND MORE OF ODIN'S PICKED WARRIORS GO FORTH FROM ASGARD, ON ROUTINE PATROLS!
SO UNSUSPECTING IS ODIN OF THE DANGER THAT THREATENS, THAT HE PERMITS A MERE SKELETON FORCE TO REMAIN WITHIN THE GOLDEN CITY!
AND, WITH THOR HIMSELF STILL ON EARTH, THE MOMENT FOR ME TO STRIKE HAS FINALLY ARRIVED!

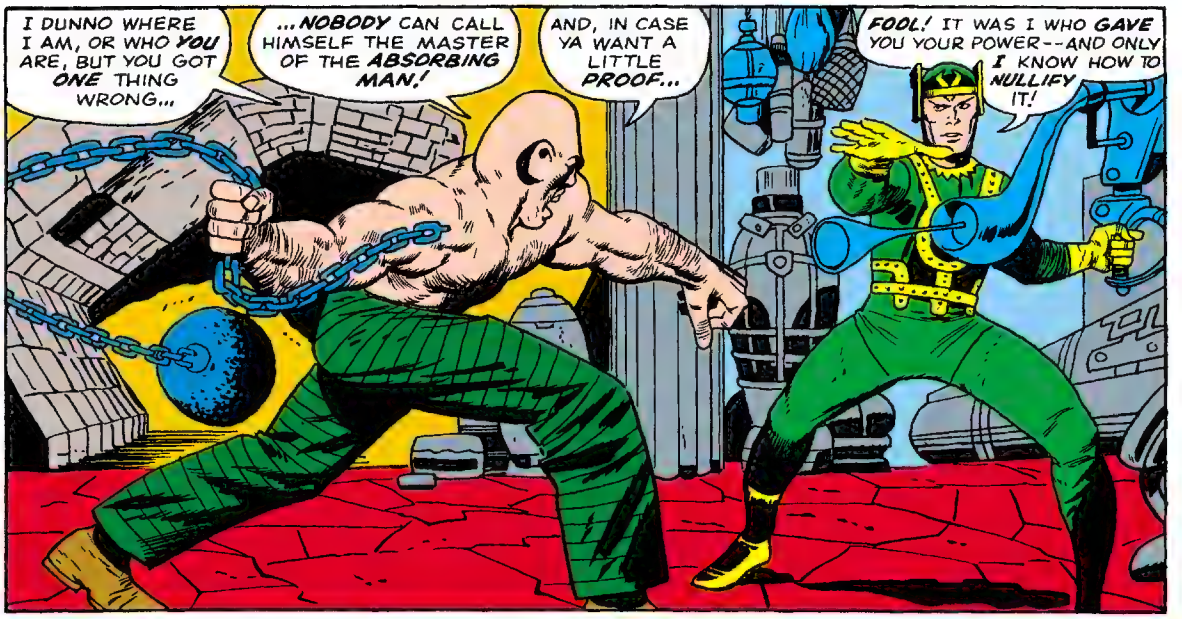

BUT, I MUST USE EVERY WEAPON--EMPLOY EVERY BIT OF CUNNING, OF VILLAINY THAT I AM MASTER OF!
AND, AT THIS FATEFUL MOMENT, I SHALL RALLY THE POWER OF THE ABSORBING MAN TO MY SIDE!
ALL I NEED DO IS DIRECT THIS ATTRACTOR BEAM TO EARTH--!

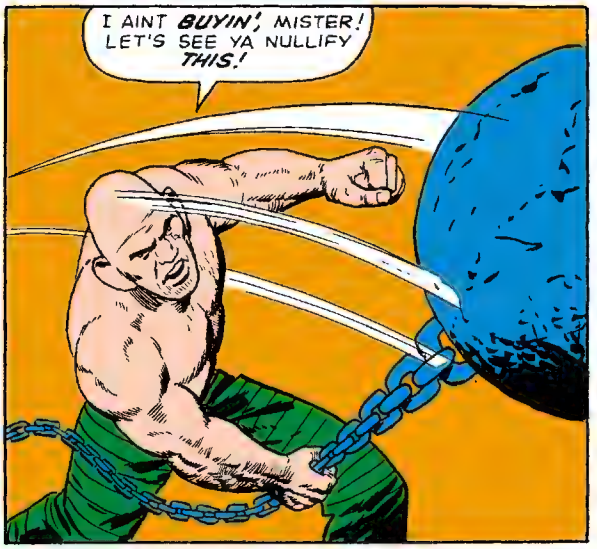

THUS, I SHALL SAVE MY HUMAN PUPPET FROM DEFEAT--WHILE HIS POWER WILL INSURE MY OWN COMPLETE VICTORY!

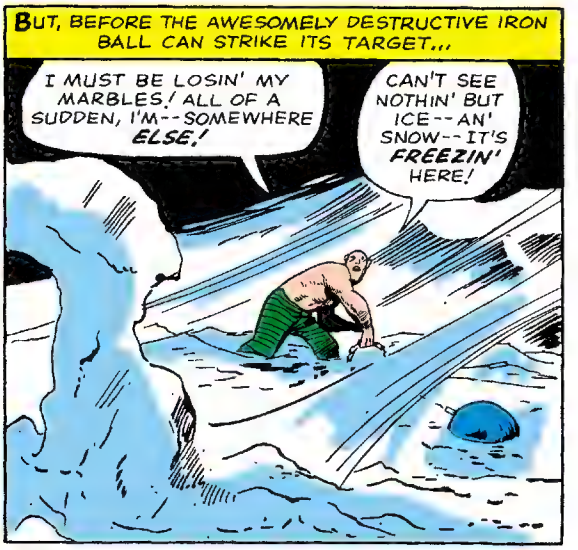
AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
YIELD, I COMMAND YOU.!!
CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS--!
IT AINT FAIR!! WHAT GOOD'S MY STRENGTH-- MY POWER-- IF I CAN'T LAND A BLOW?!! I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS GONNA BE LIKE THIS!!
DROP YOUR IRON BALL AND CHAIN AND SAY NO MORE! YOUR VERY VOICE IS OFFENSIVE TO MY EARS!
BUT THEN, SEEMINGLY FROM EVERYWHERE AT ONCE--FROM NOWHERE--FROM SPACE BEYOND SPACE, TIME BEYOND TIME--THE ATTRACTOR BEAM AIMED BY EVIL LOKI, ENVELOPS THE DUMBFOUNDED MORTAL--!
NO! NO! WHA- WHAT'S HAPPENIN' TO ME?!
HE'S GONE!
VANISHED-- BEFORE MY VERY EYES!
THAT DAZZLING BOLT OF LIGHT DID IT!
I HAVE SEEN SUCH A PHENOMENON BEFORE !! IT IS THE ATTRACTOR BEAM OF ULARIC!
THAT MEANS I MUST SEEK MY FOE--IN ASGARD!!!
BUT, BEFORE THE IMMORTAL AVENGER CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE...
AN EXPLOSION!! FROM THE BUILDING ABOVE!!
5

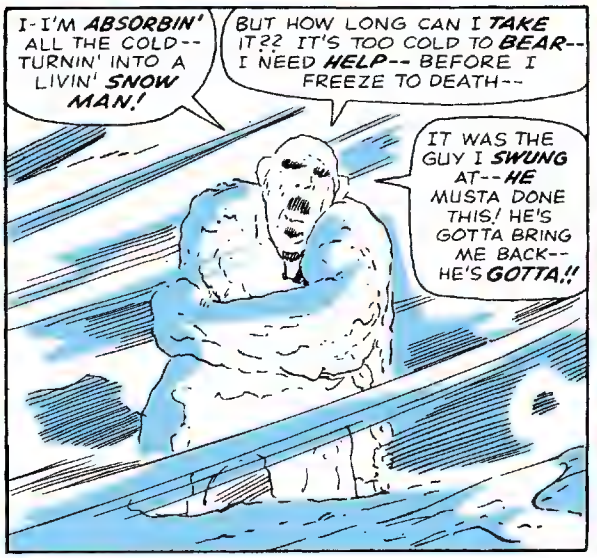

AND, MANY STORIES ABOVE--THE IMPRISONED JANE FOSTER, WHO HAD DARINGLY CAUSED A GAS EXPLOSION IN ORDER TO SHATTER HER BULLET-PROOF WINDOW GLASS, SCREAMS AS ONLY A DESPERATE FEMALE CAN--!
HE'S LOOKING UP! HE'S GOT TO NOTICE ME! HE'S GOT TO!!
THOR!! THOR!! HELP ME! PLEASE-- HELP ME!
HE HEARD ME! THANK HEAVEN-- HE'LL FIND A WAY TO FREE ME!
GET BACK FROM THE WINDOW-- WHILE MY HAMMER STRIKES!
HER FACE!! CAN IT REALLY BE--?? NO! IT IS TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR!!
EVER SINCE SHE VANISHED, I SEEM TO SEE JANE FOSTER'S LOVELY FEATURES EVERYWHERE I LOOK--!!
I AM JUST IN TIME! SHE HAS BEEN OVERCOME BY THE SMOKE FROM THE EXPLOSION!
BUT, WHO IS SHE? WHY WAS SHE HELD PRISONER HERE--AND BY WHOM??
BUT THEN, AS HE TENDERLY TURNS THE UNCONSCIOUS GIRL TO FACE HIM, THOR SEES...
ODIN BE PRAISED!! IT IS SHE! THE GIRL I LOVE! BUT-- WHAT HAS BEFALLEN HER?
IF SHE IS INJURED, THEN DR. BLAKE CAN AID HER MORE THAN THE GOD OF THUNDER!
WITH THOSE GRIM WORDS, THE MIGHTY THOR POUNDS HIS ENCHANTED MALLET UPON THE FLOOR, AS THE VERY HEAVENS SEEM TO TREMBLE...!
6

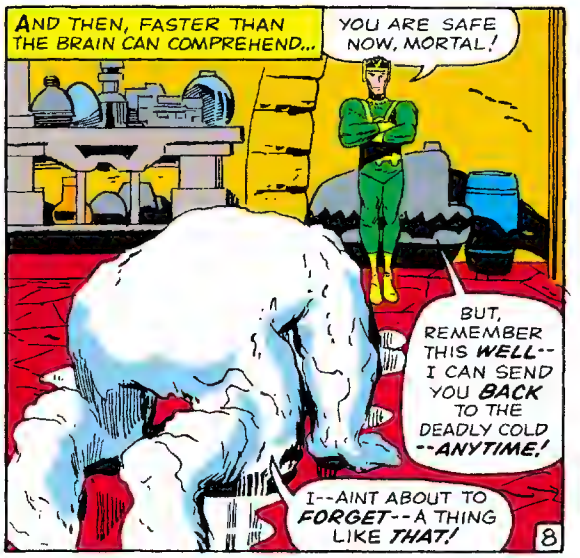

BUT, NO SOONER DOES THE LAME DOCTOR--WHO NOW STANDS WHERE AN IMMORTAL HAD STOOD --LIFTS THE LIMP GIRL IN HIS ARMS, THEN--!
AT LAST-- MY LONG WAIT HAS BEEN REWARDED!
A CAMERA FLASH GUN!!
WHOEVER HE IS, HE MUST HAVE SEEN ME CHANGE FROM THOR TO MY MORTAL FORM!
WHO ARE YOU?? WHY HAVE YOU BEEN HOLDING THIS GIRL CAPTIVE??
I MEANT HER NO HARM! SHE WAS MERELY THE BAIT WHICH I NEEDED TO CATCH YOU!
I'D HAVE RISKED ANYTHING--EVEN MY LIFE-- --IN ORDER TO GET THAT ONE PICTURE!
IF YOU'VE LEARNED WHAT I SUSPECT YOU'VE LEARNED --YOU SHOULD KNOW I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO KEEP THAT KNOWLEDGE!
I ALSO KNOW THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!
AND THEN, SLOWLY, DRAMATICALLY, THE MASKED MAN REMOVES HIS IDENTITY-CONCEALING HOOD, ONLY TO STAND REVEALED AS--
HARRIS HOBBS!! THE AFFILIATED PRESS REPORTER! WE MET THE FIRST TIME THOR FOUGHT THE ABSORBING MAN--MONTHS AGO! *
YOU MEAN-- THE FIRST TIME YOU FOUGHT HIM, DON'T YOU, DOCTOR BLAKE? I KNOW YOUR SECRET NOW!!
*WILL YOU EVER FORGET THAT THRILLING MOMENT IN THOR #114? --STAN.
AND, EVEN AS THE STUNNING IMPACT OF HOBBS' WORDS SINKS INTO DON BLAKE'S CONSCIOUSNESS, NEW AND STARTLING EVENTS ARE TAKING SHAPE IN ASGARD...
WHAT HAPPENED?? WHERE AM I?
TURN, MORTAL! TURN AND FACE YOUR MASTER --LOKI!!
7


I DUNNO WHERE I AM, OR WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU GOT ONE THING WRONG...
...NOBODY CAN CALL HIMSELF THE MASTER OF THE ABSORBING MAN!
AND, IN CASE YA WANT A LITTLE PROOF...
FOOL! IT WAS I WHO GAVE YOU YOUR POWER--AND ONLY I KNOW HOW TO NULLIFY IT!


I AINT BUYIN', MISTER! LET'S SEE YA NULLIFY THIS!

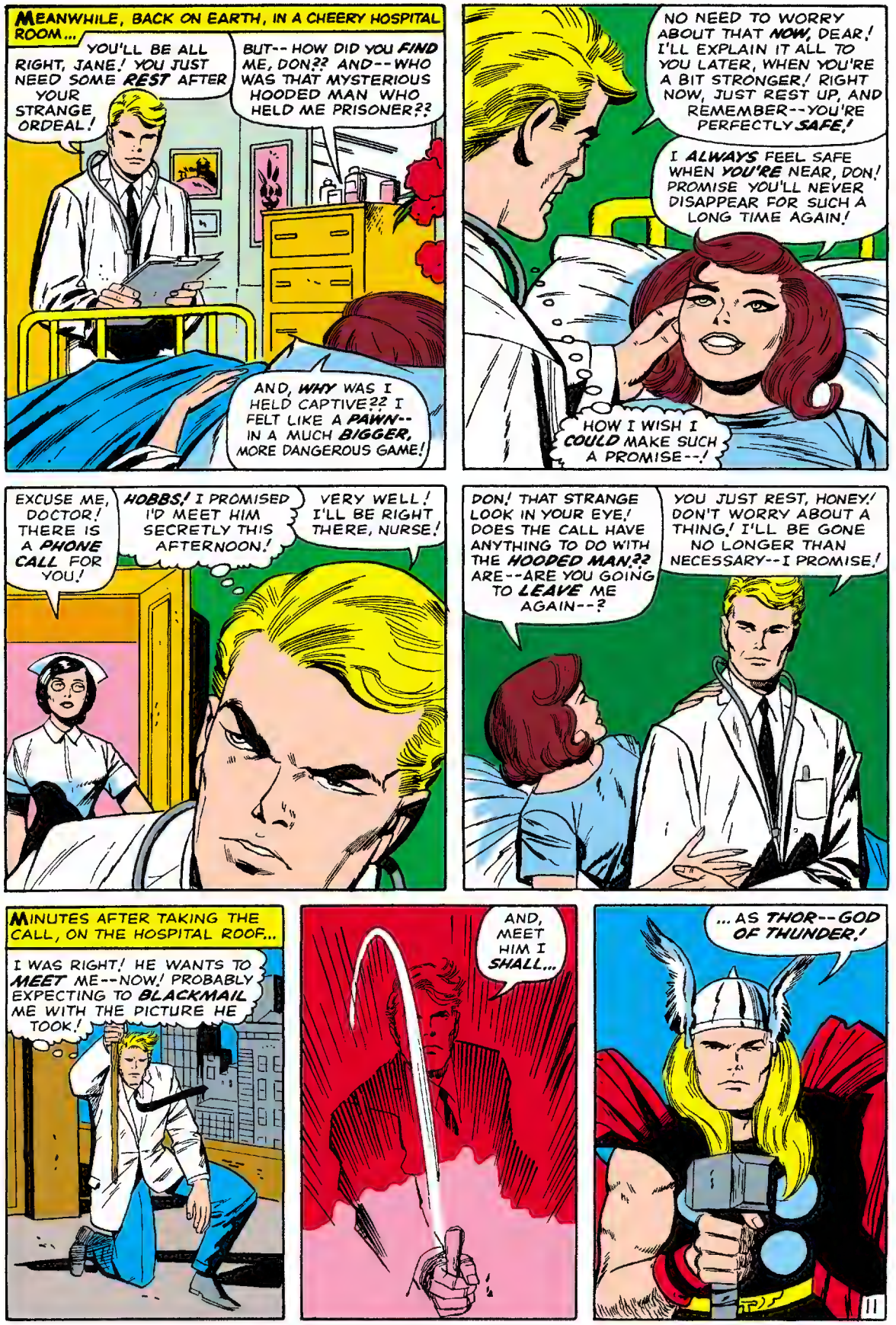

BUT, BEFORE THE AWESOMELY DESTRUCTIVE IRON BALL CAN STRIKE ITS TARGET...
I MUST BE LOSIN' MY MARBLES! ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M--SOMEWHERE ELSE!
CAN'T SEE NOTHIN' BUT ICE--AN' SNOW--IT'S FREEZIN' HERE!

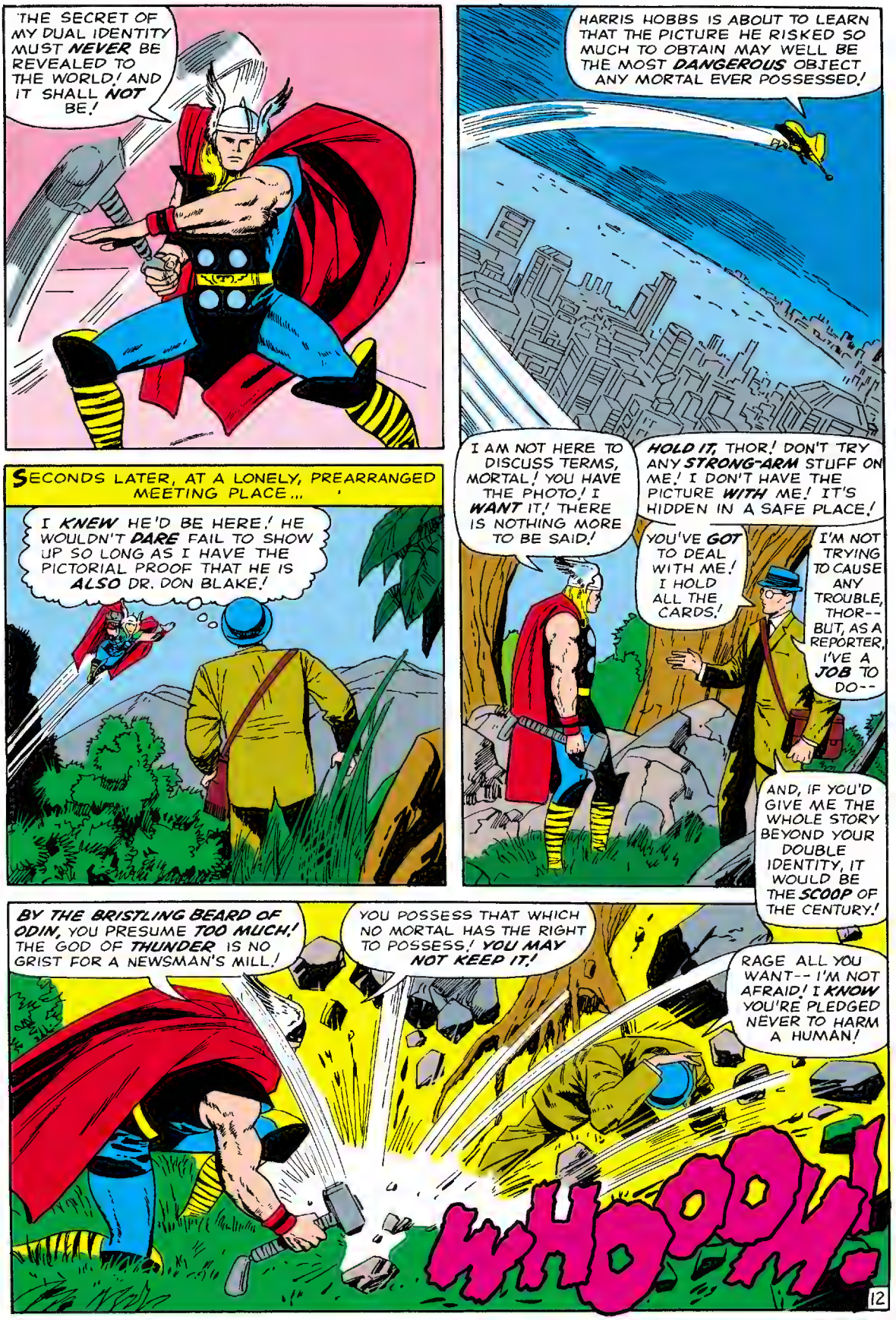

I-I'M ABSORBIN' ALL THE COLD--TURNIN' INTO A LIVIN' SNOW MAN!
BUT HOW LONG CAN I TAKE IT?? IT'S TOO COLD TO BEAR--I NEED HELP-- BEFORE I FREEZE TO DEATH--
IT WAS THE GUY I SWUNG AT--HE MUSTA DONE THIS! HE'S GOTTA BRING ME BACK--HE'S GOTTA!!


AND THEN, FASTER THAN THE BRAIN CAN COMPREHEND...
YOU ARE SAFE NOW, MORTAL!
BUT, REMEMBER THIS WELL--I CAN SEND YOU BACK TO THE DEADLY COLD --ANYTIME!
I--AINT ABOUT TO FORGET--A THING LIKE THAT!

NOW, HEED MY WORDS! IF YOU SERVE ME FAITHFULLY, WITHOUT QUESTION, YOU AND I CAN SHARE DOMINION OF THE UNIVERSE! BUT, IF YOU DEFY ME, YOUR PUNISHMENT WILL BE SWIFT AND MERCILESS!
I GET THE PICTURE! SO, OKAY --I'M YOUR BOY!
A SHORT TIME LATER, WARRIORS STANDING IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF ODIN'S IMPERIAL PALACE, ARE STARTLED TO SEE...
DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME?? CAN THAT BE LOKI--THE PRINCE OF EVIL??
THERE IS TREACHERY MOST FOUL HERE! LOKI IS UNDER SENTENCE TO SERVE ULARIC!
KEEP WALKING! WITH LOKI AT YOUR SIDE, YOU NEED FEAR NOTHING THAT LIVES!
HE CALLED THIS PLACE ASGARD! BUT--WHERE IS IT? WHY WON'T HE TELL ME?
STAND FAST! BY WHAT RIGHT DO YOU COME HERE? ON WHOSE AUTHORITY HAS YOUR SERVITUDE TO ULARIC THE WARLOCK BEEN ENDED?
AND, THAT CREATURE WITH YOU-- IF HE BE A MORTAL, YOU HAVE COMMITTED THE GRAVEST CRIME BY BRINGING HIM TO ASGARD!
SPEAK NOT TO LOKI OF CRIME! WITHIN THE HOUR, MY EVERY WISH SHALL BE THE IMPERIAL LAW! FOR THIS MORTAL IS MORE THAN HE SEEMS--HE IS THE WEAPON WITH WHICH I SHALL DETHRONE ODIN HIMSELF!
YEAH! YOU SQUARES DON'T CUT NO ICE WITH ME! I CAN LICK THE WHOLE BUNCH OF YA! WHAT LOKI SAYS GOES!
NOW, ATTACK!
AND THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, LOKI'S MOST DANGEROUS CREATION STRIKES...!
THE MORE OF YA I FIGHT, THE MORE POWER I ABSORB! I BECOME AS STRONG AS ANYONE I TOUCH!
THE ALARM! SOUND THE ALARM!
THIS IS MADNESS! NEVER HAS REGAL ODIN BEEN SO THREATENED!!
9

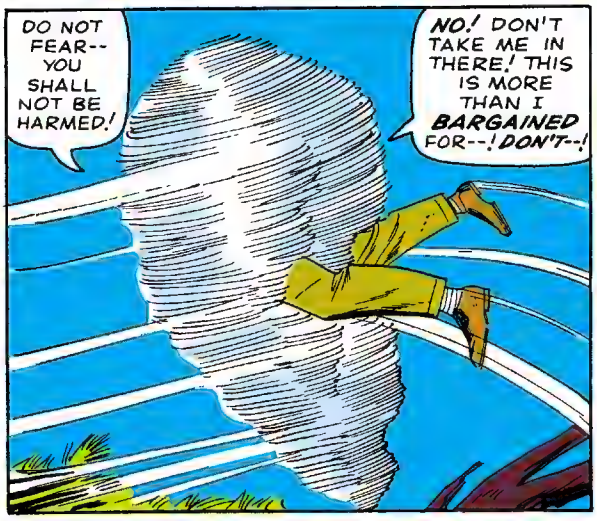
VALIANTLY, EACH LOYAL ASGARDIAN WARRIOR, IN HIS TURN, ATTACKS THE DEFIANT MORTAL--AS THE ABSORBING MAN GROWS MORE DANGEROUS WITH EACH ASSAULT....!
FOR ASGARD!!
HAH! I HOPED YA'D TRY THAT....!
...BECAUSE I NEVER TURNED INTO A LIVING MACE BEFORE!!!
THEN, LIKE A HUMAN BATTERING RAM, THE ABSORBING MAN CHARGES THRU THE EVER-GROWING ARMY OF WARRIORS, GAINING INCREASED POWER WITH EACH PASSING SECOND....!
NO POWER, SAVE THAT OF THOR--OR ODIN, CAN STOP HIM!
AND YET, HE MUST HAVE A PLAN TO OVERCOME ODIN HIMSELF--OR HE'D NOT HAVE DARED SUCH AN ATTACK!
HE SPOKE THE TRUTH! HIS STRENGTH IS THE EQUAL OF ALL OUR COMBINED POWER!
ONLY ONE OTHER MIGHT CONQUER HIM--LOKI, WITH HIS MIRACULOUS MAGIC, MIGHT BE HIS MASTER!
YET, THE EVIL ONE FIGHTS WITH OUR FOE--AGAINST ODIN!
10

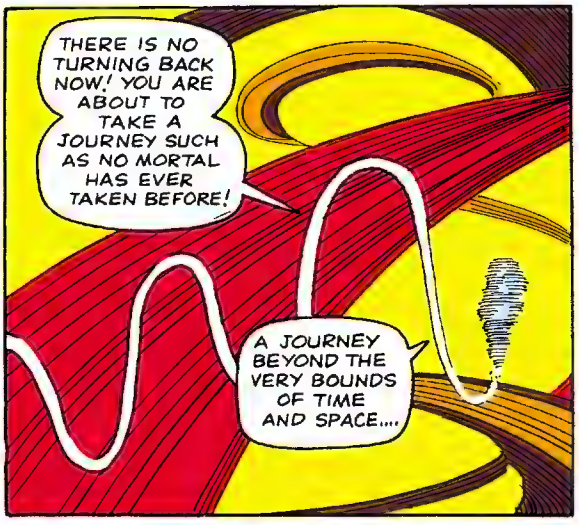

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH, IN A CHEERY HOSPITAL ROOM...
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, JANE! YOU JUST NEED SOME REST AFTER YOUR STRANGE ORDEAL!
BUT-- HOW DID YOU FIND ME, DON?? AND--WHO WAS THAT MYSTERIOUS HOODED MAN WHO HELD ME PRISONER??
AND, WHY WAS I HELD CAPTIVE?? I FELT LIKE A PAWN-- IN A MUCH BIGGER, MORE DANGEROUS GAME!
NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW, DEAR! I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL TO YOU LATER, WHEN YOU'RE A BIT STRONGER! RIGHT NOW, JUST REST UP, AND REMEMBER--YOU'RE PERFECTLY SAFE!
I ALWAYS FEEL SAFE WHEN YOU'RE NEAR, DON! PROMISE YOU'LL NEVER DISAPPEAR FOR SUCH A LONG TIME AGAIN!
HOW I WISH I COULD MAKE SUCH A PROMISE--!
EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR! THERE IS A PHONE CALL FOR YOU!
HOBBS! I PROMISED I'D MEET HIM SECRETLY THIS AFTERNOON!
VERY WELL! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, NURSE!
DON! THAT STRANGE LOOK IN YOUR EYE! DOES THE CALL HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE HOODED MAN?? ARE--ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE ME AGAIN--?
YOU JUST REST, HONEY! DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING! I'LL BE GONE NO LONGER THAN NECESSARY--I PROMISE!
MINUTES AFTER TAKING THE CALL, ON THE HOSPITAL ROOF...
I WAS RIGHT! HE WANTS TO MEET ME--NOW! PROBABLY EXPECTING TO BLACKMAIL ME WITH THE PICTURE HE TOOK!
AND, MEET HIM I SHALL...
...AS THOR--GOD OF THUNDER!
11

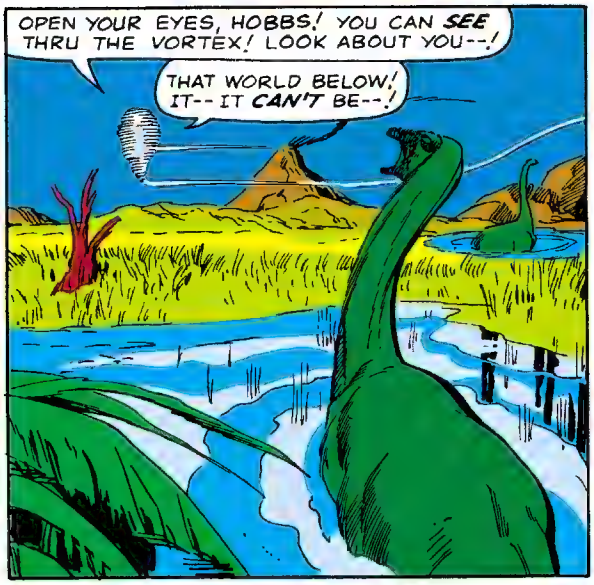

THE SECRET OF MY DUAL IDENTITY MUST NEVER BE REVEALED TO THE WORLD! AND IT SHALL NOT BE!
HARRIS HOBBS IS ABOUT TO LEARN THAT THE PICTURE HE RISKED SO MUCH TO OBTAIN MAY WELL BE THE MOST DANGEROUS OBJECT ANY MORTAL EVER POSSESSED!
SECONDS LATER, AT A LONELY, PREARRANGED MEETING PLACE...
I KNEW HE'D BE HERE! HE WOULDN'T DARE FAIL TO SHOW UP SO LONG AS I HAVE THE PICTORIAL PROOF THAT HE IS ALSO DR. DON BLAKE!
I AM NOT HERE TO DISCUSS TERMS, MORTAL! YOU HAVE THE PHOTO! I WANT IT! THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID!
HOLD IT, THOR! DON'T TRY ANY STRONG-ARM STUFF ON ME! I DON'T HAVE THE PICTURE WITH ME! IT'S HIDDEN IN A SAFE PLACE!
YOU'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH ME! I HOLD ALL THE CARDS!
I'M NOT TRYING TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE, THOR-- BUT, AS A REPORTER, I'VE A JOB TO DO--
AND, IF YOU'D GIVE ME THE WHOLE STORY BEYOND YOUR DOUBLE IDENTITY, IT WOULD BE THE SCOOP OF THE CENTURY!
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN, YOU PRESUME TOO MUCH! THE GOD OF THUNDER IS NO GRIST FOR A NEWSMAN'S MILL!
YOU POSSESS THAT WHICH NO MORTAL HAS THE RIGHT TO POSSESS! YOU MAY NOT KEEP IT!
RAGE ALL YOU WANT-- I'M NOT AFRAID! I KNOW YOU'RE PLEDGED NEVER TO HARM A HUMAN!
WHOOM!

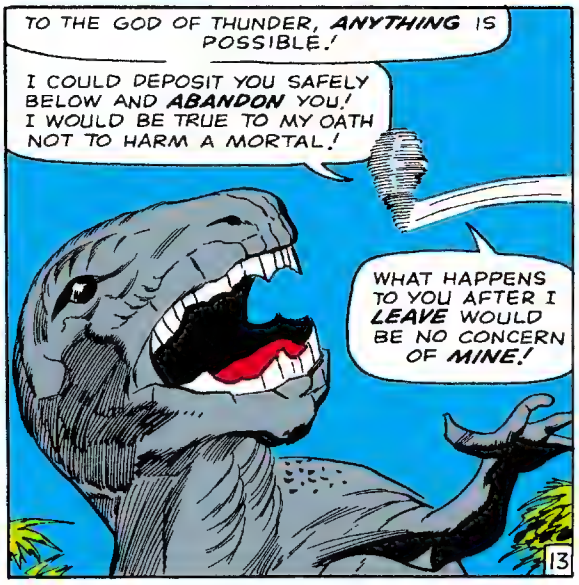
I DO NOT NEED TO CAUSE BODILY INJURY --THERE ARE OTHER MEANS.!
HE'S CREATING SOME SORT OF WIND VORTEX WITH HIS HAMMER-- RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES.!
YOUR HAMMER.! THAT SPINNING CURRENT OF WIND! WHA-WHAT ARE YOU DOING--??!

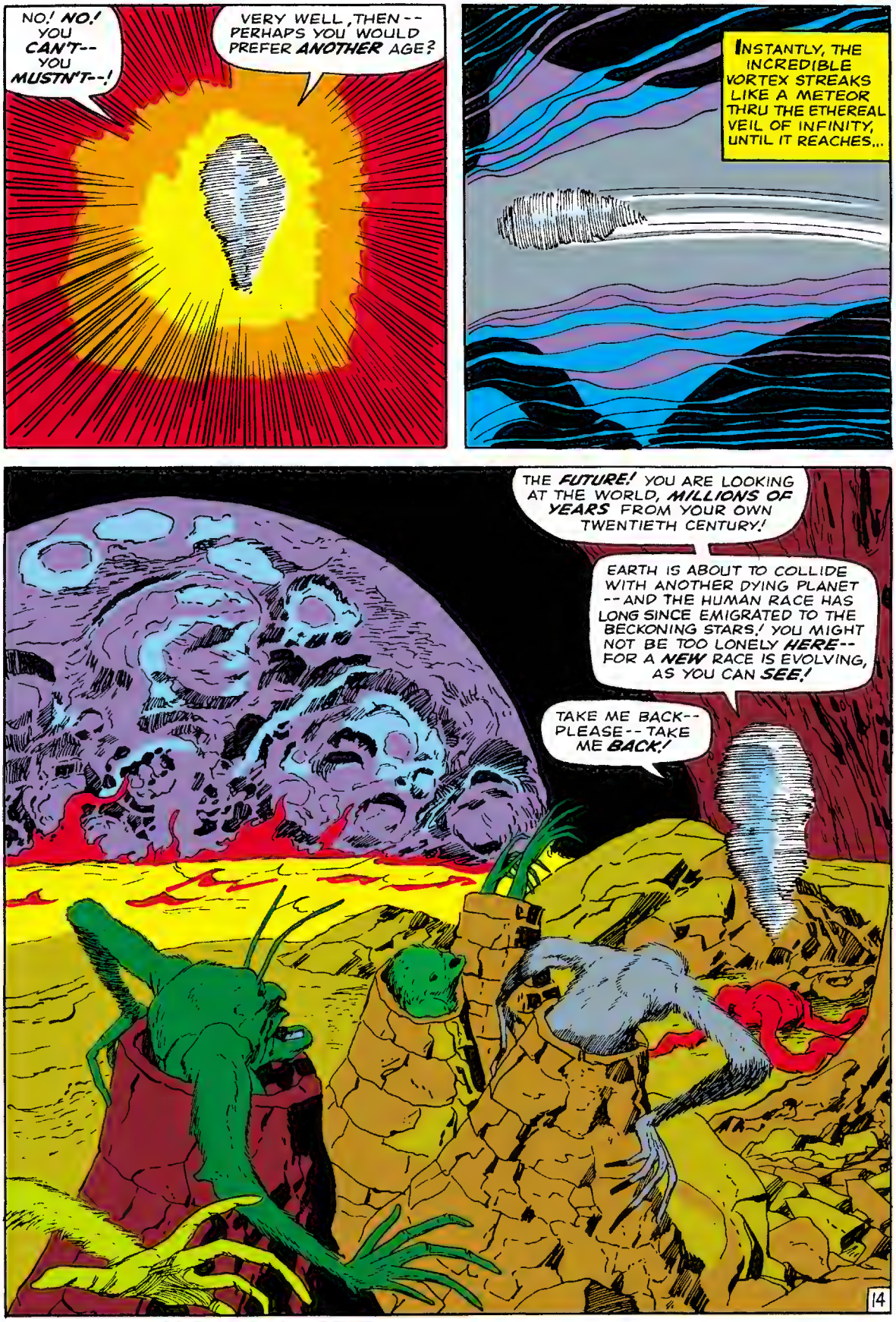
I AM ABOUT TO SHOW HOW FOOLHARDY IT IS TO INCUR THE WRATH OF THOR!
NO! NO!

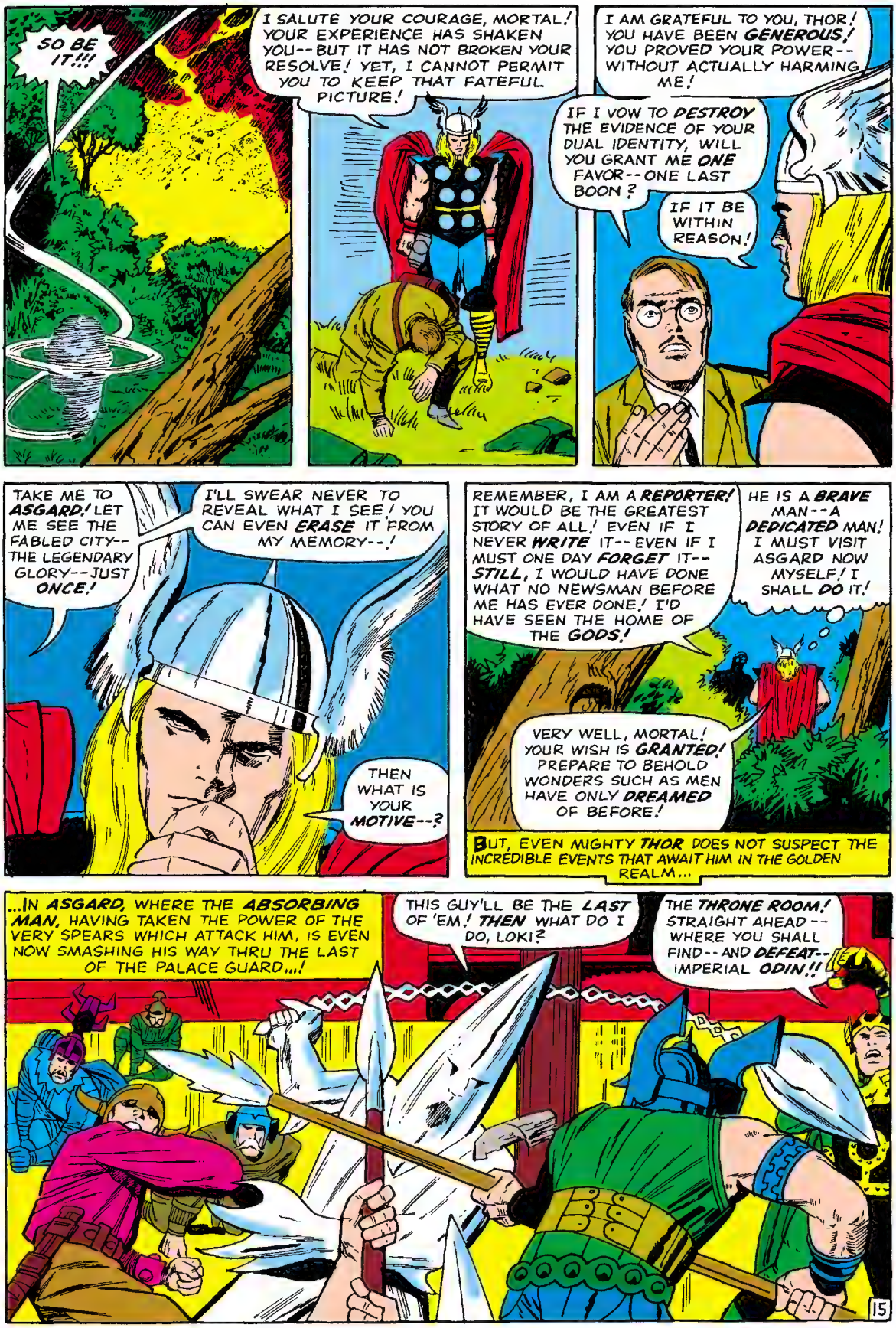

DO NOT FEAR-- YOU SHALL NOT BE HARMED!
NO! DON'T TAKE ME IN THERE! THIS IS MORE THAN I BARGAINED FOR--! DON'T--!


THERE IS NO TURNING BACK NOW! YOU ARE ABOUT TO TAKE A JOURNEY SUCH AS NO MORTAL HAS EVER TAKEN BEFORE!
A JOURNEY BEYOND THE VERY BOUNDS OF TIME AND SPACE....


OPEN YOUR EYES, HOBBS! YOU CAN SEE THRU THE VORTEX! LOOK ABOUT YOU--!
THAT WORLD BELOW! IT-- IT CAN'T BE--!


TO THE GOD OF THUNDER, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!
I COULD DEPOSIT YOU SAFELY BELOW AND ABANDON YOU! I WOULD BE TRUE TO MY OATH NOT TO HARM A MORTAL!
WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AFTER I LEAVE WOULD BE NO CONCERN OF MINE!

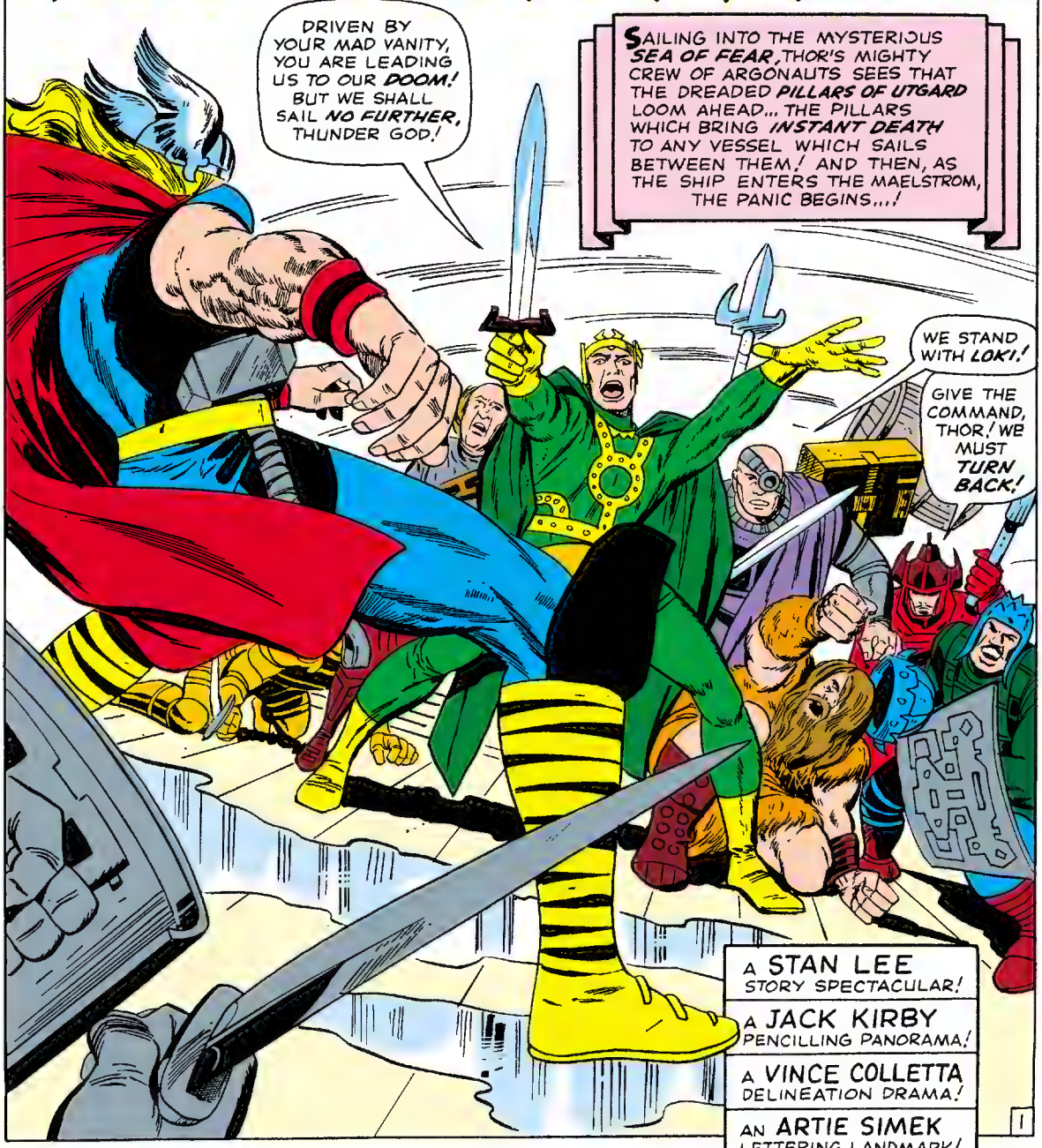

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T-- YOU MUSTN'T--!
VERY WELL, THEN-- PERHAPS YOU WOULD PREFER ANOTHER AGE?
INSTANTLY, THE INCREDIBLE VORTEX STREAKS LIKE A METEOR THRU THE ETHEREAL VEIL OF INFINITY, UNTIL IT REACHES...
THE FUTURE! YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE WORLD, MILLIONS OF YEARS FROM YOUR OWN TWENTIETH CENTURY!
EARTH IS ABOUT TO COLLIDE WITH ANOTHER DYING PLANET -- AND THE HUMAN RACE HAS LONG SINCE EMIGRATED TO THE BECKONING STARS! YOU MIGHT NOT BE TOO LONELY HERE-- FOR A NEW RACE IS EVOLVING, AS YOU CAN SEE!
TAKE ME BACK-- PLEASE-- TAKE ME BACK!
14


SO BE IT!!!
I SALUTE YOUR COURAGE, MORTAL! YOUR EXPERIENCE HAS SHAKEN YOU--BUT IT HAS NOT BROKEN YOUR RESOLVE! YET, I CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO KEEP THAT FATEFUL PICTURE!
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, THOR! YOU HAVE BEEN GENEROUS! YOU PROVED YOUR POWER--WITHOUT ACTUALLY HARMING ME!
IF I VOW TO DESTROY THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR DUAL IDENTITY, WILL YOU GRANT ME ONE FAVOR--ONE LAST BOON?
IF IT BE WITHIN REASON!
TAKE ME TO ASGARD! LET ME SEE THE FABLED CITY--THE LEGENDARY GLORY--JUST ONCE!
I'LL SWEAR NEVER TO REVEAL WHAT I SEE! YOU CAN EVEN ERASE IT FROM MY MEMORY--!
THEN WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE--?
REMEMBER, I AM A REPORTER! IT WOULD BE THE GREATEST STORY OF ALL! EVEN IF I NEVER WRITE IT--EVEN IF I MUST ONE DAY FORGET IT--STILL, I WOULD HAVE DONE WHAT NO NEWSMAN BEFORE ME HAS EVER DONE! I'D HAVE SEEN THE HOME OF THE GODS!
HE IS A BRAVE MAN--A DEDICATED MAN! I MUST VISIT ASGARD NOW MYSELF! I SHALL DO IT!
VERY WELL, MORTAL! YOUR WISH IS GRANTED! PREPARE TO BEHOLD WONDERS SUCH AS MEN HAVE ONLY DREAMED OF BEFORE!
BUT, EVEN MIGHTY THOR DOES NOT SUSPECT THE INCREDIBLE EVENTS THAT AWAIT HIM IN THE GOLDEN REALM...
...IN ASGARD, WHERE THE ABSORBING MAN, HAVING TAKEN THE POWER OF THE VERY SPEARS WHICH ATTACK HIM, IS EVEN NOW SMASHING HIS WAY THRU THE LAST OF THE PALACE GUARD...!
THIS GUY'LL BE THE LAST OF 'EM! THEN WHAT DO I DO, LOKI?
THE THRONE ROOM! STRAIGHT AHEAD--WHERE YOU SHALL FIND--AND DEFEAT--IMPERIAL ODIN!!

BUT THEN, THE MOST COMMANDING VOICE IN ALL THE GALAXIES BOOMS OUT--!
WHO DARES INVADE THE SANCTUM OF ODIN, THE ALL-WISE!
SO YOU'RE THE GUY I'M AFTER! YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE SO MUCH TO ME!
BWEEOOW!
NONE SPEAK THUS TO THE LORD OF ASGARD!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?? YOU STILL STAND? AFTER HAVING BEEN STRUCK WITH A COSMIC BOLT BY ODIN!??
GRAMPS, YOU GOT A LOT TO LEARN! I CAN ABSORB ANYTHING YOU SHOOT AT ME! I'M LIKE LOADED WITH COSMIC ENERGY NOW!
THEN, IT'S TRUE! MY VERY RULE IS BEING THREATENED --FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A MILLENNIUM!
SKIP THE BIG WORDS, POPS! ALL THAT COUNTS IS POWER --AN' I GOT IT TO SPARE!
NOW THAT I SOAKED UP THE FORCE YA HIT ME WITH, HERE IT IS RIGHT BACK AT YA! LET'S SEE HOW YOU CAN TAKE IT!
THE END
SPECTACLE BEYOND WORDS! WONDERS BEYOND DESCRIPTION! SURPRISES BEYOND ANY MERE MORTAL EXPECTATION! ALL THESE AND MORE SHALL BE YOURS NEXT ISSUE! DON'T DARE MISS IT! WE HAVE SPOKEN!
16

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS

"THE GRIM SPECTER OF MUTINY!"

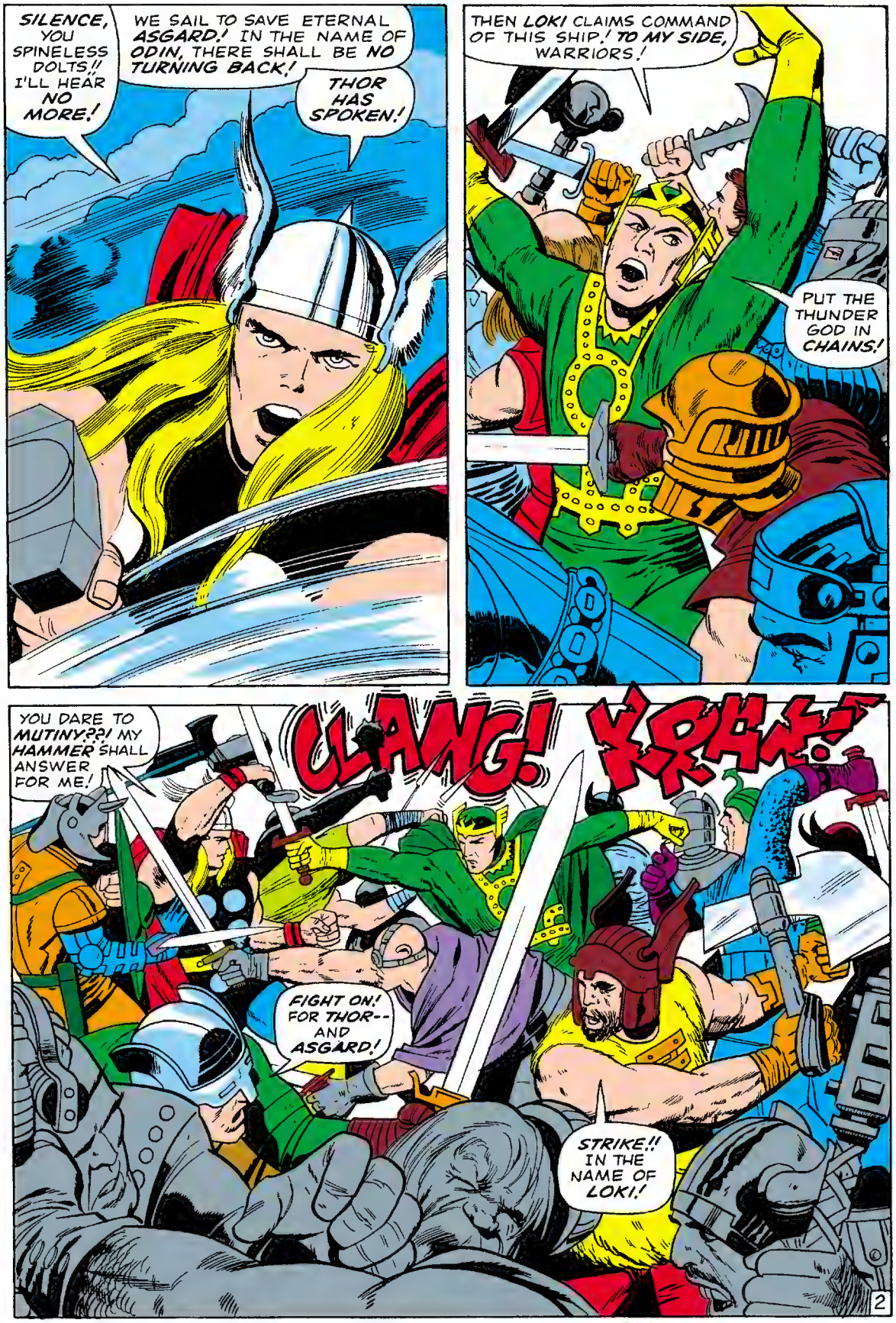

DRIVEN BY YOUR MAD VANITY, YOU ARE LEADING US TO OUR DOOM! BUT WE SHALL SAIL NO FURTHER, THUNDER GOD!
SAILING INTO THE MYSTERIOUS SEA OF FEAR, THOR'S MIGHTY CREW OF ARGONAUTS SEES THAT THE DREADED PILLARS OF UTGARD LOOM AHEAD... THE PILLARS WHICH BRING INSTANT DEATH TO ANY VESSEL WHICH SAILS BETWEEN THEM! AND THEN, AS THE SHIP ENTERS THE MAELSTROM, THE PANIC BEGINS...!
WE STAND WITH LOKI!
GIVE THE COMMAND, THOR! WE MUST TURN BACK!

A STAN LEE STORY SPECTACULAR!

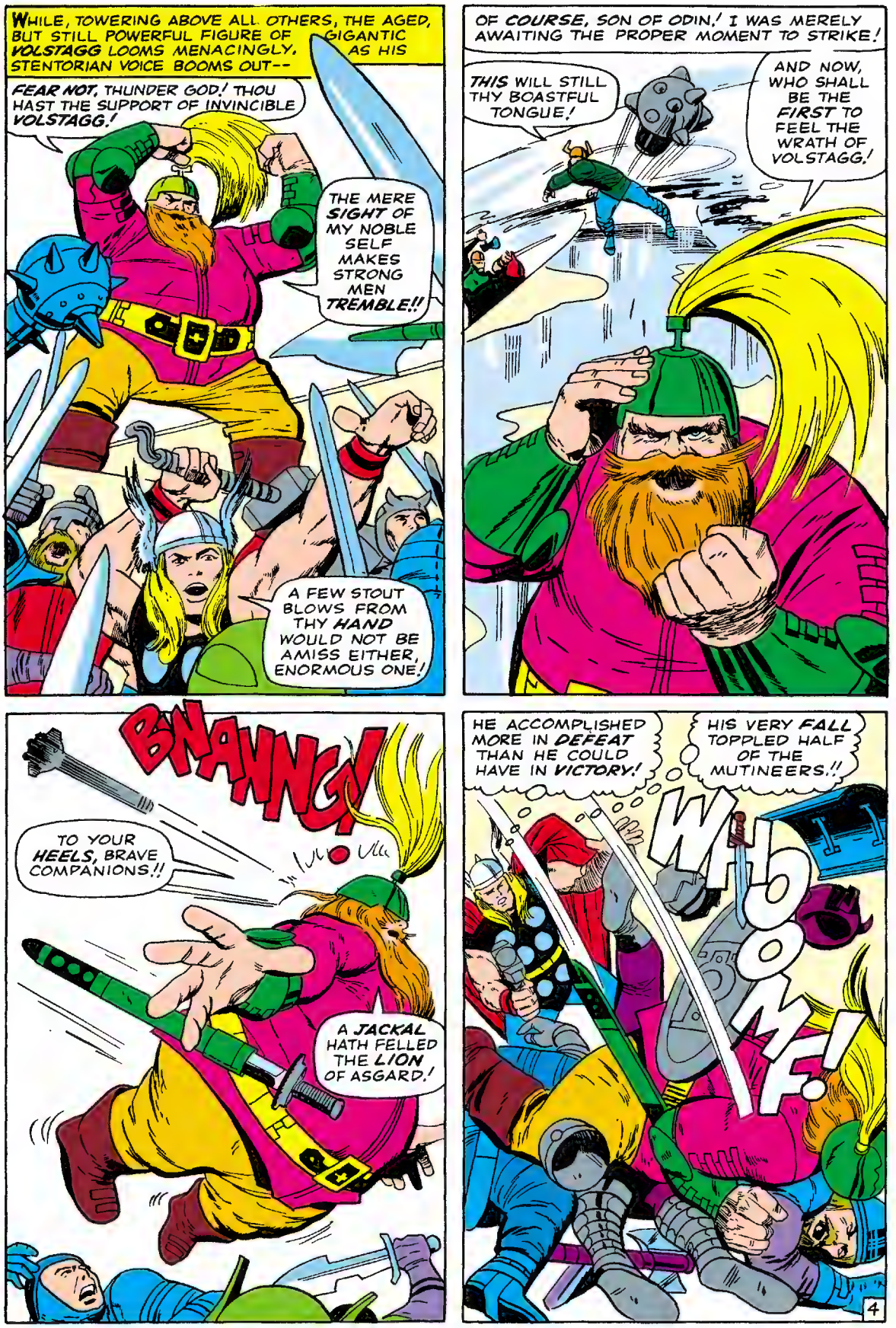
A JACK KIRBY PENCILLING PANORAMA!

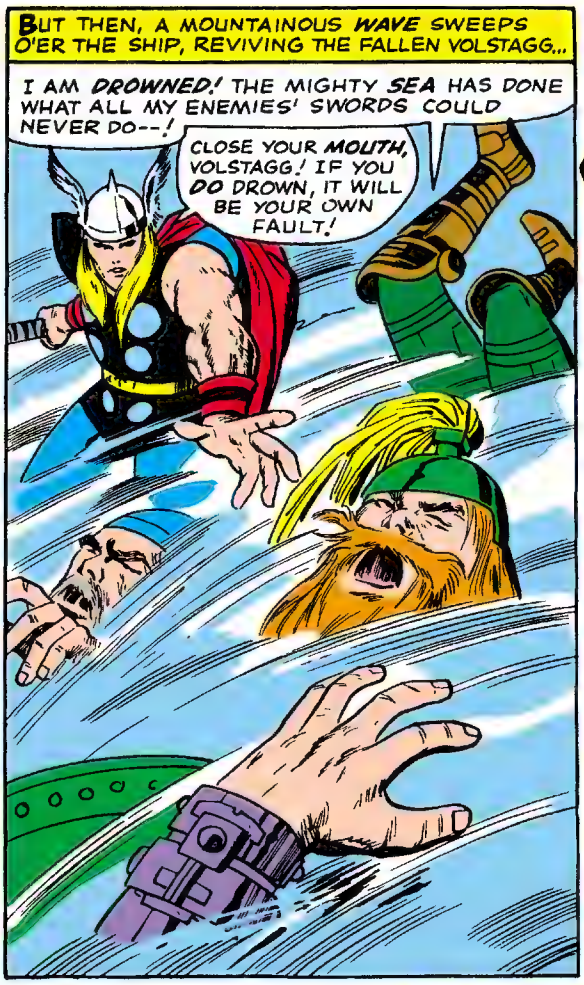
A VINCE COLLETTA DELINEATION DRAMA!

AN ARTIE SIMEK LETTERING LANDMARK!

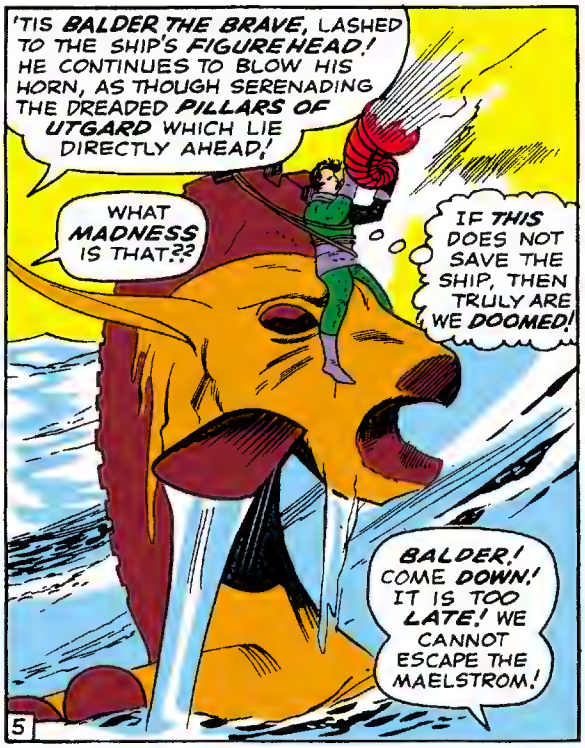

SILENCE, YOU SPINELESS DOLTS!! I'LL HEAR NO MORE!
WE SAIL TO SAVE ETERNAL ASGARD! IN THE NAME OF ODIN, THERE SHALL BE NO TURNING BACK!
THOR HAS SPOKEN!
THEN LOKI CLAIMS COMMAND OF THIS SHIP! TO MY SIDE, WARRIORS!
PUT THE THUNDER GOD IN CHAINS!
YOU DARE TO MUTINY?? MY HAMMER SHALL ANSWER FOR ME!
CLANG!
KRAK!
FIGHT ON! FOR THOR-- AND ASGARD!
STRIKE!! IN THE NAME OF LOKI!

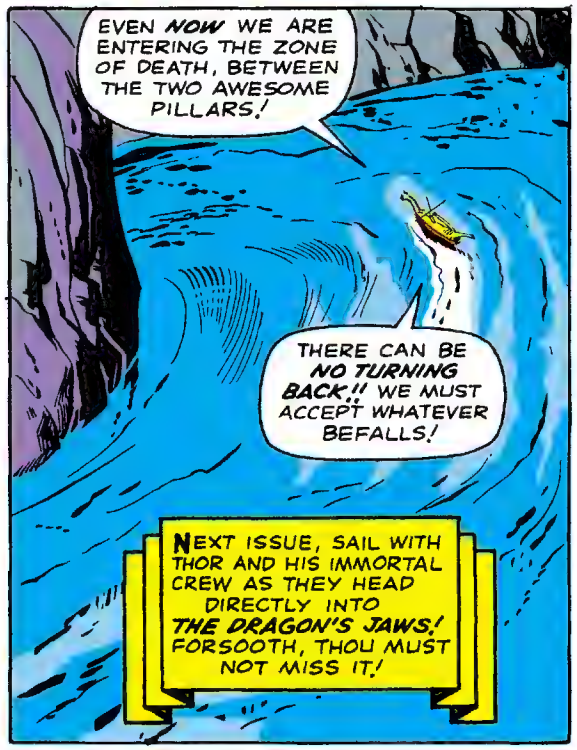
THOUGH SOME THERE ARE WHO SUPPORT THE EVIL LOKI, THE VALIANT GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL IS NOT WITHOUT HIS SUPPORTERS, TOO! SUPPORTERS SUCH AS--
MAKE WAY, THOU BASE AND LOWLY VARLETS! MAKE WAY FOR FANDRAL, THE DASHING!!
FANDRAL, THE DASHING--BAH! LONG HAVE I WAITED TO LET THEE TASTE THE COLD STEEL OF MY--URKK!
LONGER YET WILT THOU HAVE TO WAIT, BUMPKIN!
WITH THE DAZZLING STYLE OF A MASTER, AND THE GAY ABANDON OF A CAREFREE YOUTH, FANDRAL FIGHTS LIKE A TRUE ALLY OF THOR!
WHAT? ONLY A DOZEN BLADES AGAINST ME? FIE UPON THEE, KNAVES!
AND, YET ANOTHER THERE IS WHOSE PROWESS IS BROUGHT INTO PLAY ON THE SIDE OF MIGHTY THOR! BUT, HOGUN THE GRIM, FIGHTS WITH A DIFFERENT STYLE--RUTHLESS, SAVAGE, AND UNYIELDING--!
BACK, THOU DASTARDLY MUTINEER--BACK, I SAY!
KI-AH!
NOW SHALL YOU LEARN THAT HOGUN'S WRATH IS MORE TO BE FEARED THAN THE PILLARS OF UTGARD! THY FATE IS SEALED, MUTINEER!
NO, HOGUN--NO! IT WAS LOKI'S FAULT--I KNEW NOT WHAT I DID!
UNNNNN!
MUTINY! THE VERY WORD MAKES THE HACKLES OF HOGUN RISE!!!
3

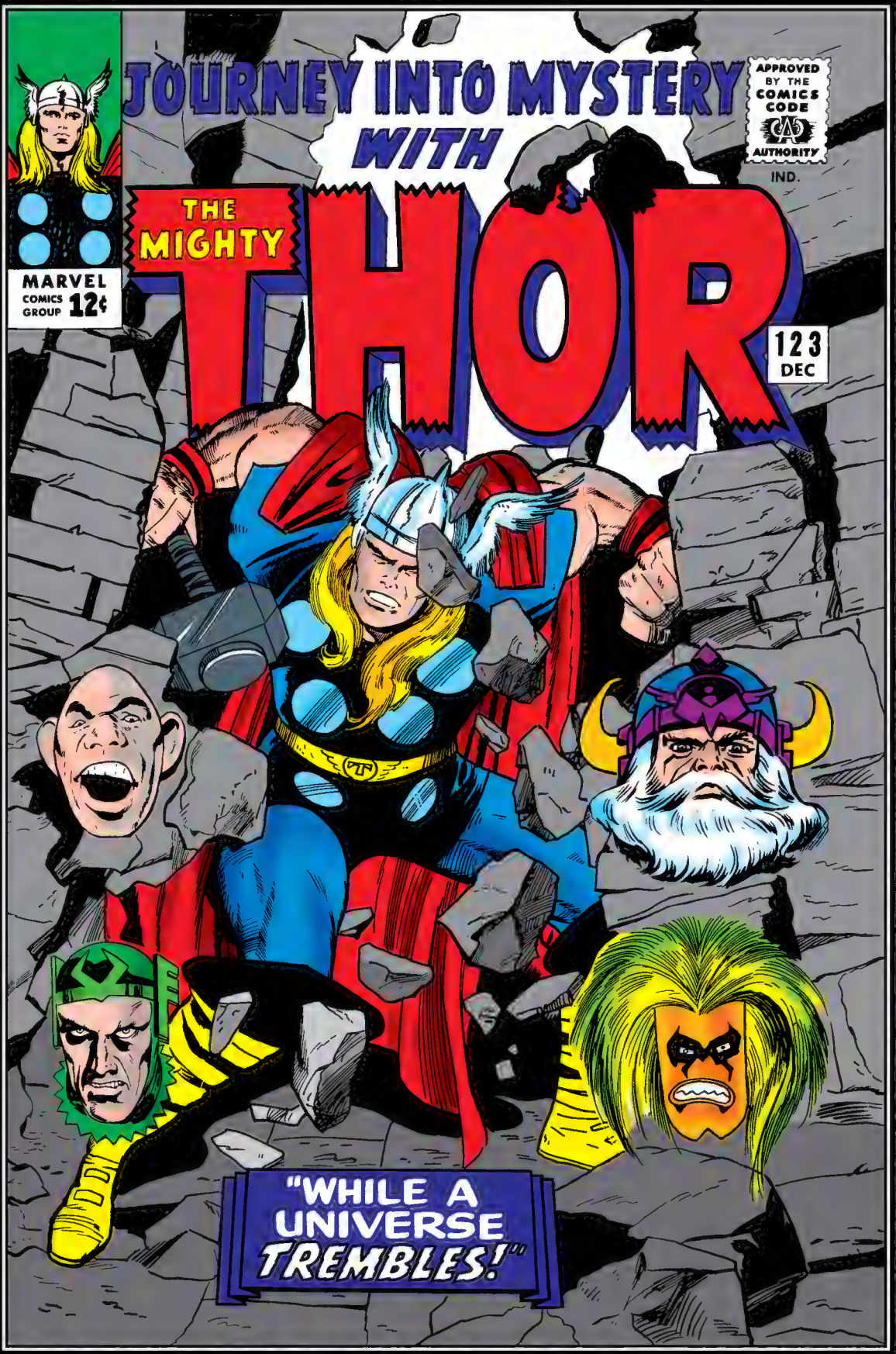

WHILE, TOWERING ABOVE ALL OTHERS, THE AGED, BUT STILL POWERFUL FIGURE OF GIGANTIC VOLSTAGG LOOMS MENACINGLY, AS HIS STENTORIAN VOICE BOOMS OUT--
FEAR NOT, THUNDER GOD! THOU HAST THE SUPPORT OF INVINCIBLE VOLSTAGG!
THE MERE SIGHT OF MY NOBLE SELF MAKES STRONG MEN TREMBLE!!
A FEW STOUT BLOWS FROM THY HAND WOULD NOT BE AMISS EITHER, ENORMOUS ONE!
OF COURSE, SON OF ODIN! I WAS MERELY AWAITING THE PROPER MOMENT TO STRIKE!
THIS WILL STILL THY BOASTFUL TONGUE!
AND NOW, WHO SHALL BE THE FIRST TO FEEL THE WRATH OF VOLSTAGG!
BNAWNG!
TO YOUR HEELS, BRAVE COMPANIONS!!
A JACKAL HATH FELLED THE LION OF ASGARD!
HE ACCOMPLISHED MORE IN DEFEAT THAN HE COULD HAVE IN VICTORY!
HIS VERY FALL TOPPLED HALF OF THE MUTINEERS!!
WHOOM!
4


BUT THEN, A MOUNTAINOUS WAVE SWEEPS O'ER THE SHIP, REVIVING THE FALLEN VOLSTAGG...
I AM DROWNED! THE MIGHTY SEA HAS DONE WHAT ALL MY ENEMIES' SWORDS COULD NEVER DO--!
CLOSE YOUR MOUTH, VOLSTAGG! IF YOU DO DROWN, IT WILL BE YOUR OWN FAULT!

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE FIGHTING COMES TO A SWIFT HALT, AS THE ALMOST DEAFENING BLAST OF A GREAT HORN RINGS OUT--!
WHOOOOO
LOOK! ABOVE US--THAT FIGURE! WHO CAN IT BE??
I RECOGNIZE HIS VISAGE! IN TRUTH, I WOULD KNOW HIM ANY-WHERE!


'TIS BALDER THE BRAVE, LASHED TO THE SHIP'S FIGUREHEAD! HE CONTINUES TO BLOW HIS HORN, AS THOUGH SERENADING THE DREADED PILLARS OF UTGARD WHICH LIE DIRECTLY AHEAD!
WHAT MADNESS IS THAT??
IF THIS DOES NOT SAVE THE SHIP, THEN TRULY ARE WE DOOMED!
BALDER! COME DOWN! IT IS TOO LATE! WE CANNOT ESCAPE THE MAELSTROM!
5


EVEN NOW WE ARE ENTERING THE ZONE OF DEATH, BETWEEN THE TWO AWESOME PILLARS!
THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK!! WE MUST ACCEPT WHATEVER BEFALLS!
NEXT ISSUE, SAIL WITH THOR AND HIS IMMORTAL CREW AS THEY HEAD DIRECTLY INTO THE DRAGON'S JAWS! FORSOOTH, THOU MUST NOT MISS IT!


JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
123
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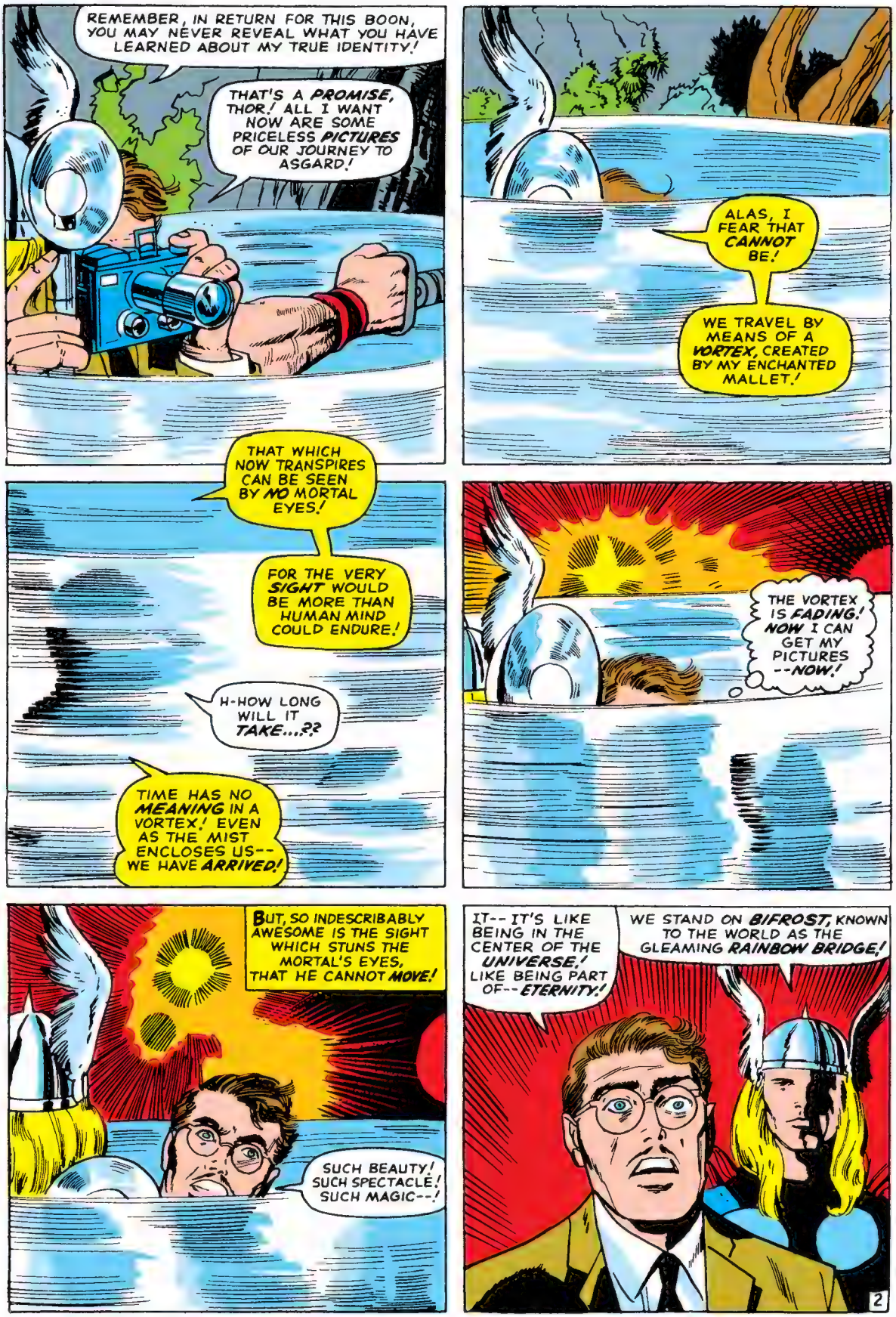
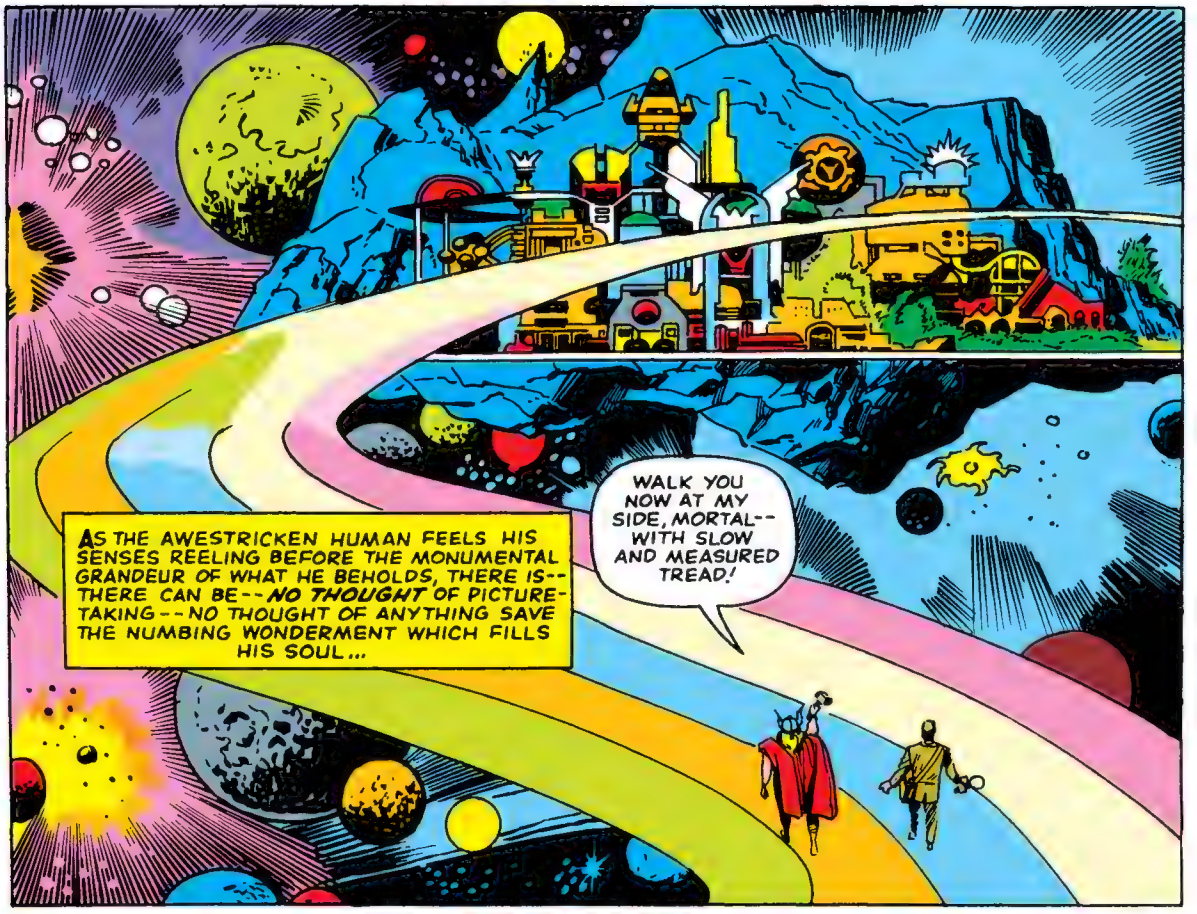
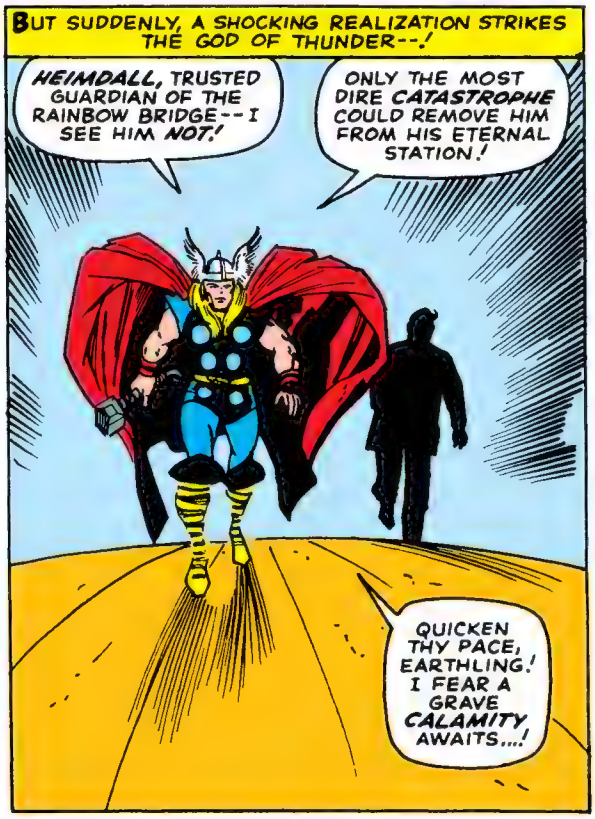
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
"WHILE A UNIVERSE TREMBLES!"

THE MIGHTY THOR!
"WHILE A UNIVERSE TREMBLES!"
PREPARE FOR WONDERS WITHOUT END, MORTAL!! FOR I TAKE YOU NOW, TO-- ASGARD!
WE SWEAR BY THE URU HAMMER THAT THESE WORDS HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH...
AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGEMENT, MIGHTY THOR HAS PROMISED TO TAKE THE DETERMINED REPORTER, HARRIS HOBBS, TO ASGARD--LITTLE DREAMING THAT THE ABSORBING MAN, SPURRED ON BY EVIL LOKI, IS NOW DARING TO BATTLE ODIN HIMSELF WITHIN THE GOLDEN REALM!!
FANTASY TO DAZZLE THY SENSES, WRITTEN BY STAN LEE!
DRAMA TO QUICKEN THY PULSE, ILLUSTRATED BY JACK KIRBY!
BEAUTY TO NOURISH THINE EYES, EMBELLISHED BY VINCE COLLETTA!
BALLOONS TO COMPOUND THY CONFUSION LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK!
1


REMEMBER, IN RETURN FOR THIS BOON, YOU MAY NEVER REVEAL WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MY TRUE IDENTITY!
THAT'S A PROMISE, THOR! ALL I WANT NOW ARE SOME PRICELESS PICTURES OF OUR JOURNEY TO ASGARD!
ALAS, I FEAR THAT CANNOT BE!
WE TRAVEL BY MEANS OF A VORTEX, CREATED BY MY ENCHANTED MALLET!
THAT WHICH NOW TRANSPIRES CAN BE SEEN BY NO MORTAL EYES!
FOR THE VERY SIGHT WOULD BE MORE THAN HUMAN MIND COULD ENDURE!
H-HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE...??
TIME HAS NO MEANING IN A VORTEX! EVEN AS THE MIST ENCLOSES US-- WE HAVE ARRIVED!
THE VORTEX IS FADING! NOW I CAN GET MY PICTURES --NOW!
BUT, SO INDESCRIBABLY AWESOME IS THE SIGHT WHICH STUNS THE MORTAL'S EYES, THAT HE CANNOT MOVE!
SUCH BEAUTY! SUCH SPECTACLE! SUCH MAGIC--!
IT-- IT'S LIKE BEING IN THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE! LIKE BEING PART OF-- ETERNITY!
WE STAND ON BIFROST, KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS THE GLEAMING RAINBOW BRIDGE!
2

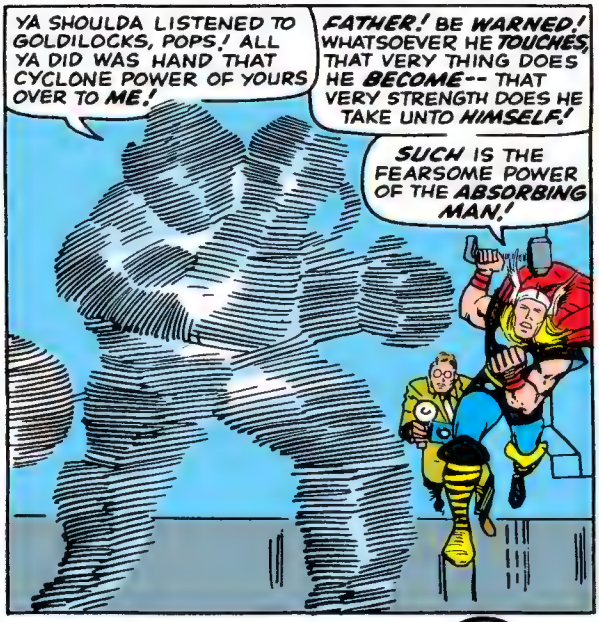

AS THE AWESTRICKEN HUMAN FEELS HIS SENSES REELING BEFORE THE MONUMENTAL GRANDEUR OF WHAT HE BEHOLDS, THERE IS--THERE CAN BE--*NO THOUGHT* OF PICTURE-TAKING--NO THOUGHT OF ANYTHING SAVE THE NUMBING WONDERMENT WHICH FILLS HIS SOUL...
WALK YOU NOW AT MY SIDE, MORTAL--WITH SLOW AND MEASURED TREAD!


BUT SUDDENLY, A SHOCKING REALIZATION STRIKES THE GOD OF THUNDER--!
HEIMDALL, TRUSTED GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE--I SEE HIM *NOT*!
ONLY THE MOST DIRE *CATASTROPHE* COULD REMOVE HIM FROM HIS ETERNAL STATION!
QUICKEN THY PACE, EARTHLING! I FEAR A GRAVE *CALAMITY* AWAITS....!

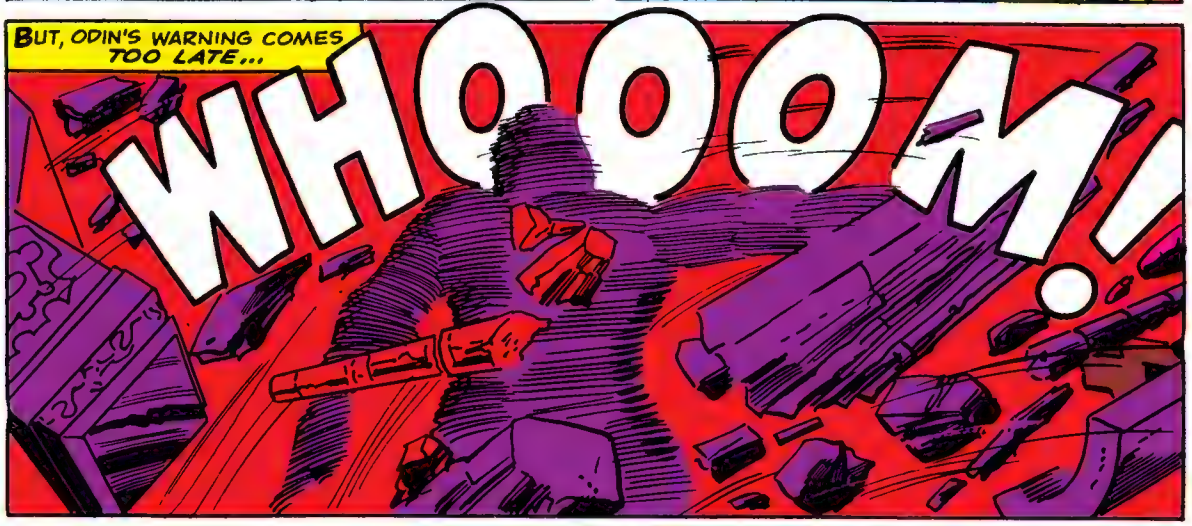
LIKE A MAN IN A TRANCE, UNABLE TO FULLY COMPREHEND THE PANORAMA ABOUT HIM, HARRIS HOBBS NUMBLY FOLLOWS THE GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL THRU THE GLEAMING GATES, INTO THE LEGENDARY CITY ITSELF...
NEVER BEFORE HAVE THE SHINING STREETS BEEN *EMPTY*! WHAT DIRE FATE HAS BEFALLEN MY FATHER'S REALM??
3

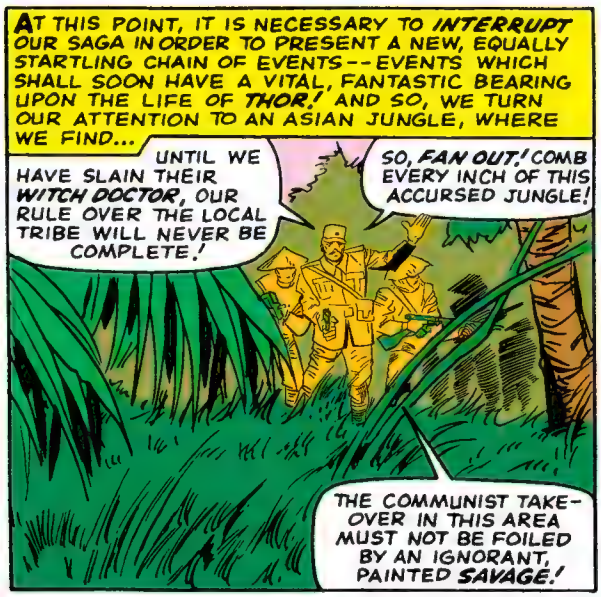
THEN, AT LAST, THOR ENCOUNTERS THE REMNANTS OF ODIN'S GUARD! HAVING BEEN HURLED BACK BY THE ATTACKING ABSORBING MAN, THEY NOW REGROUP, MUSTERING THEIR FORCE FOR ANOTHER CHARGE...
MIGHTY THOR! TRULY, THE FATES HAVE SENT THEE IN THIS HOUR OF GRAVEST NEED!
A STRANGE, MORTAL BEING, ABLE TO ABSORB OUR OWN POWER AND REPEL US WITH IT, IS EVEN NOW INVADING THE THRONE ROOM ITSELF!
THE ABSORBING MAN! ONLY LOKI BROUGHT HIM HERE!
YEA, VERILY! THY TRAITOROUS HALF-BROTHER HATH PROCLAIMED THE MORTAL INVADER TO BE HIS ALLY!
THEY STRIVE TO TOPPLE ODIN FROM HIS THRONE! LISTEN! THE BATTLE HATH BEGUN WITHIN THE IMPERIAL PALACE!
THEN STAND YOU BACK! THIS MOMENT BELONGS TO THOR!
WHOOM
FOR ODIN, AND ASGARD!
HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME! BUT, I'VE GOT TO SEE THIS THRU!
ODIN HAS HURLED A SHATTERING COSMIC BOLT! HE DOES NOT YET REALIZE THE TRUE POWER OF HIS MORTAL FOE!
MY FATHER MUST BE WARNED! HE, WHO HAD ONCE BEEN CRUSHER CREEL, CAN ABSORB SUCH BOLTS AND USE THEM AS HIS OWN DEADLY WEAPONS!
ANOTHER COSMIC BLAST! IT IS EXACTLY AS I FEARED!
THE ABSORBING MAN HURLS ODIN'S OWN COSMIC FORCES BACK AT HIM -- JUST AS LOKI MUST HAVE PLANNED IT!
4

AND, AS THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD AGAIN RUSHES FORWARD...
HERE'S YOUR OWN CRUMMY BOLT RIGHT BACK ATCHA, WHISKERS! LET'S SEE HOW YOU CAN TAKE IT!
ODIN CANNOT BE THREATENED WITH HIS OWN POWERS!
MY IMPERIAL SCEPTER OF SUPREMACY SWALLOWS THE COSMIC FURY, EVEN AS THE FIBERS OF MY BEING QUIVER WITH MOST REGAL RAGE!
RAGE ALL YA WANT TO, BIG MAN! I CAN LICK ANYTHING THAT LIVES-- AND THAT GOES FOR WHITE-HAIRED SQUARES WHO TRY TO IMPRESS ME BY GARGLIN' A LOTTA FIVE-DOLLAR WORDS!
THE LORD OF ASGARD FIGHTS WITH FAR MORE THAN WORDS, INSOLENT ONE!
WITH A SINGLE GESTURE OF MY SCEPTER, I SUBJECT THEE TO THE FORCE OF A MOLECULAR CYCLONE!
STOP, FATHER-- YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO!
TOO LATE! THE DEED IS DONE!
5

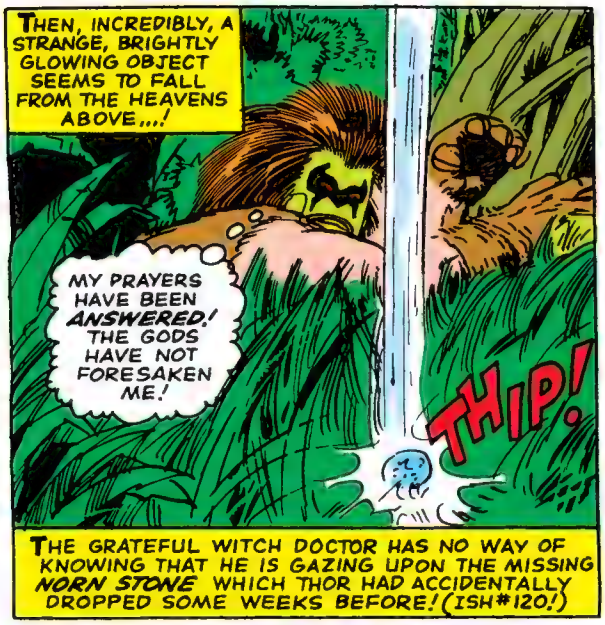

YA SHOULDA LISTENED TO GOLDILOCKS, POPS! ALL YA DID WAS HAND THAT CYCLONE POWER OF YOURS OVER TO ME!
FATHER! BE WARNED! WHATSOEVER HE TOUCHES, THAT VERY THING DOES HE BECOME-- THAT VERY STRENGTH DOES HE TAKE UNTO HIMSELF!
SUCH IS THE FEARSOME POWER OF THE ABSORBING MAN!

THEN, STAY YOU BACK, MY SON-- FOR THE FORCE OF MY MOLECULAR CYCLONE CAN STAGGER EVEN THEE!

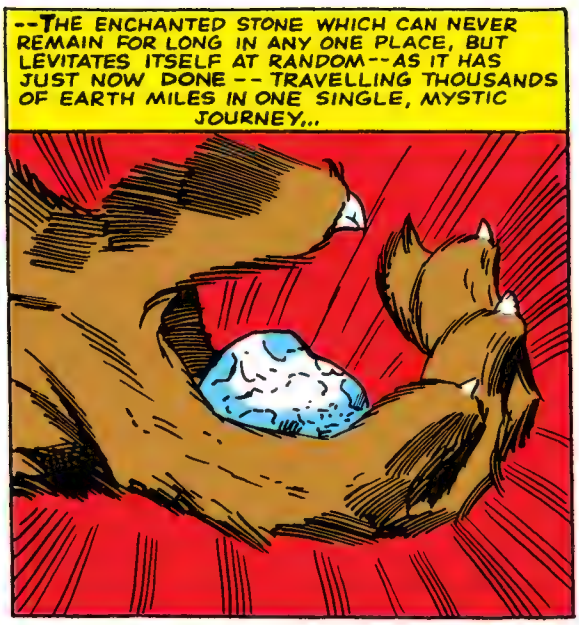

BUT, ODIN'S WARNING COMES TOO LATE...
WHOOOM!


AT THIS POINT, IT IS NECESSARY TO INTERRUPT OUR SAGA IN ORDER TO PRESENT A NEW, EQUALLY STARTLING CHAIN OF EVENTS--EVENTS WHICH SHALL SOON HAVE A VITAL, FANTASTIC BEARING UPON THE LIFE OF THOR! AND SO, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO AN ASIAN JUNGLE, WHERE WE FIND...
UNTIL WE HAVE SLAIN THEIR WITCH DOCTOR, OUR RULE OVER THE LOCAL TRIBE WILL NEVER BE COMPLETE!
SO, FAN OUT! COMB EVERY INCH OF THIS ACCURSED JUNGLE!
THE COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER IN THIS AREA MUST NOT BE FOILED BY AN IGNORANT, PAINTED SAVAGE!

WHY DO THE GODS NOT AID ME? WHY DO THEY NOT SHOW THEIR POWER, TO HELP RID OUR LAND OF THE INVADERS?
IF THEY WOULD BUT SEND ME A SIGN-- A TOKEN OF THEIR SUPPORT!

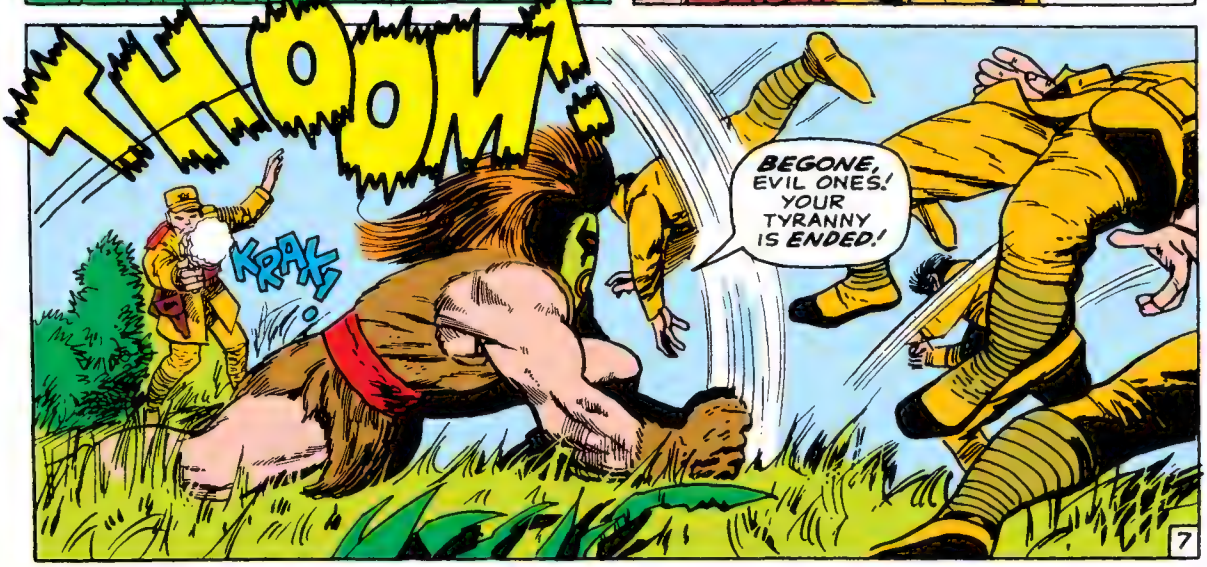

THEN, INCREDIBLY, A STRANGE, BRIGHTLY GLOWING OBJECT SEEMS TO FALL FROM THE HEAVENS ABOVE...!
MY PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED! THE GODS HAVE NOT FORESAKEN ME!
THIP!

THE GRATEFUL WITCH DOCTOR HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT HE IS GAZING UPON THE MISSING *NORN STONE* WHICH THOR HAD ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED SOME WEEKS BEFORE! (ISH #120!)


--THE ENCHANTED STONE WHICH CAN NEVER REMAIN FOR LONG IN ANY ONE PLACE, BUT LEVITATES ITSELF AT RANDOM--AS IT HAS JUST NOW DONE -- TRAVELLING THOUSANDS OF EARTH MILES IN ONE SINGLE, MYSTIC JOURNEY...

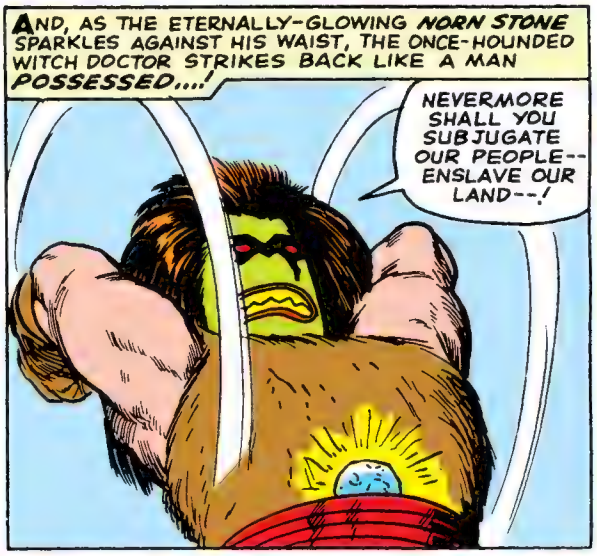
AND, THE MOMENT THE HUNTED MAN GRASPS THE BEWITCHED BAUBLE, A FANTASTIC *CHANGE* COMES OVER HIM--
THE GODS HAVE GRANTED ME *POWER!* POWER ENOUGH TO SHAKE THE *WORLD!*

LOOK! THERE HE *IS!*
THE *FOOL!* HE HAD NOT BRAINS ENOUGH TO REMAIN HIDDEN! BY RISING, HE HAS SEALED HIS DOOM! *FIRE!*
IT IS PASSING STRANGE! THERE IS NO TRACE OF *FEAR* IN HIS DEMEANOR!

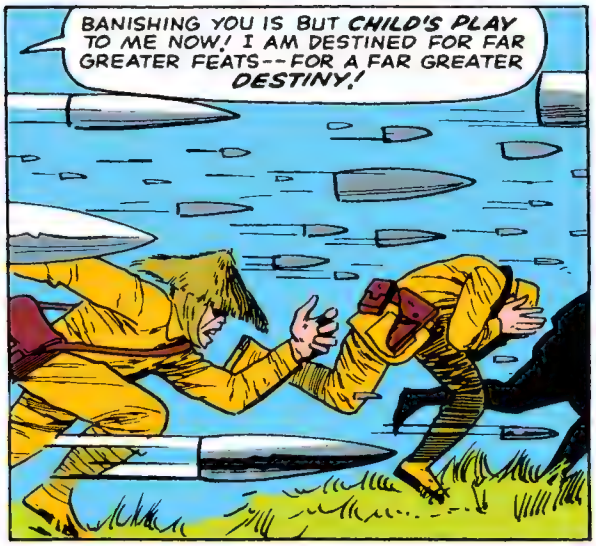


YOUR THUNDER STICKS CANNOT HARM ME NOW!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? HE HAS BECOME A DEMON!

YOU CAUGHT OUR SHELLS -- IN YOUR TWO HANDS!
THE SPIRITS THEMSELVES HAVE RISEN AGAINST US! WE MUST FLEE!

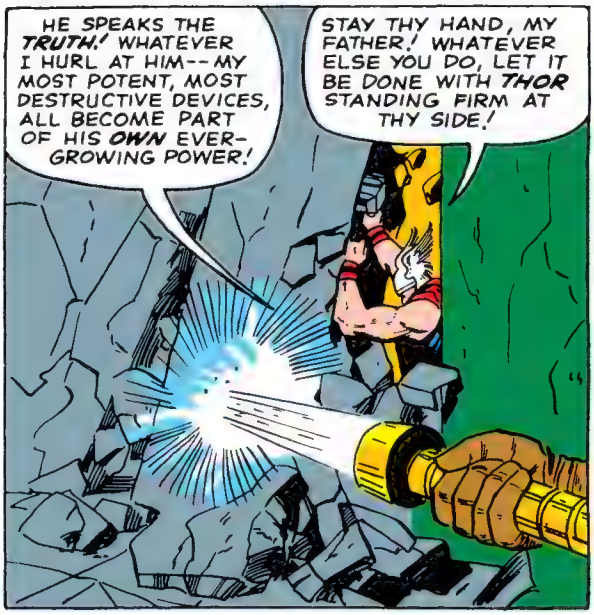

AND, AS THE ETERNALLY-GLOWING NORN STONE SPARKLES AGAINST HIS WAIST, THE ONCE-HOUNDED WITCH DOCTOR STRIKES BACK LIKE A MAN POSSESSED....!
NEVERMORE SHALL YOU SUBJUGATE OUR PEOPLE -- ENSLAVE OUR LAND --!

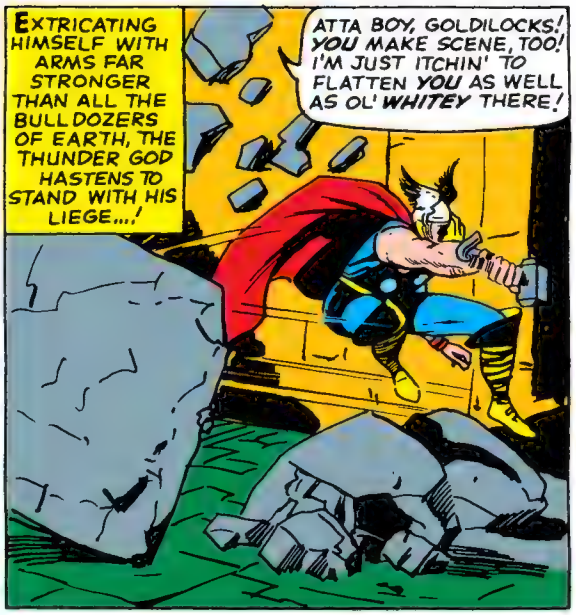
NOT WHILE THE GODS HAVE GIVEN ME THE GIFT OF MATCHLESS POWER!

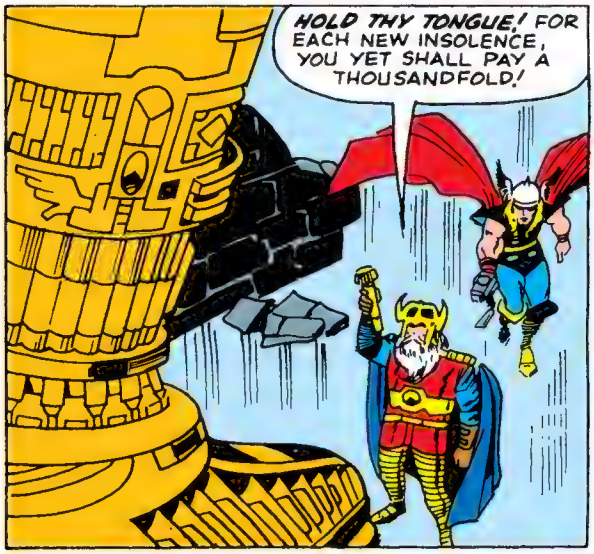

BANISHING YOU IS BUT CHILD'S PLAY TO ME NOW! I AM DESTINED FOR FAR GREATER FEATS -- FOR A FAR GREATER DESTINY!

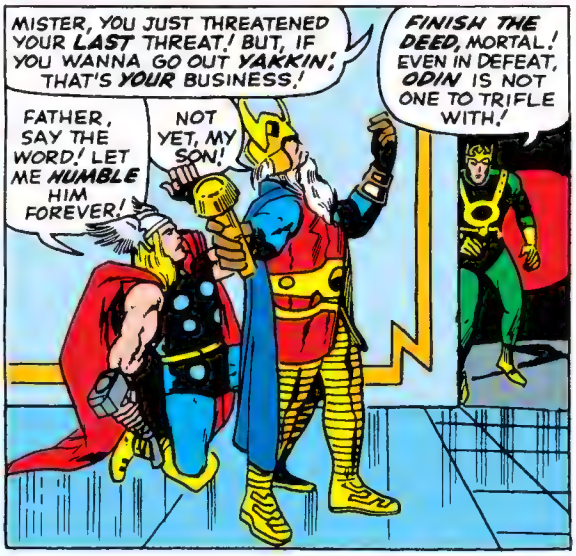
HE WHO HOLDS THIS STONE CAN RULE THE WORLD! NOT FOR NOTHING HAVE THE GODS BEQUEATHED IT TO ME! I AM MEANT TO CONQUER -- AND I SHALL NOT FAIL!

BUT, THE TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE EARTH ONCE AGAIN, AND RETURN TO THE STAGGERING SPECTACLE WHICH AWAITS US IN ASGARD...
NOTHIN' CAN GET NEAR ME WHILE I'VE GOT YOUR CYCLONE POWER--BUT THAT AINT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME....!
I'VE GOTTA ABSORB SOME NEW POWER, SO I CAN FINISH YA OFF--FOR GOOD!
I BESEECH THEE, MY FATHER! TAKE THY LEAVE SO THAT I MAY FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT FOR THEE!
NAY, GOD OF THUNDER! STILL AM I ODIN, THE ALL-POWERFUL! STILL AM I SUPREME!
YOU JUST DON'T DIG THE MESSAGE, POPS! THIS IS YOUR SWAN SONG!
I'M GONNA ABSORB ENOUGH STRENGTH FROM THIS MARBLE TO GROW AND GROW, TILL I CAN CRUSH YA LIKE A FLEA!
AND, IF YOU'RE STILL DUMB ENOUGH TO THROW ANY MORE GIZMOS AT ME, I'LL ABSORB THEM, TOO! YOU'VE HAD IT, WHISKERS!
"THEN, IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED, AFTER YOU'RE DONE FOR, I'LL ABSORB EVERY HUNK OF STRENGTH IN ALL OF ASGARD!! BEFORE I'M DONE, I'LL RULE THE WHOLE BLAMED UNIVERSE!"

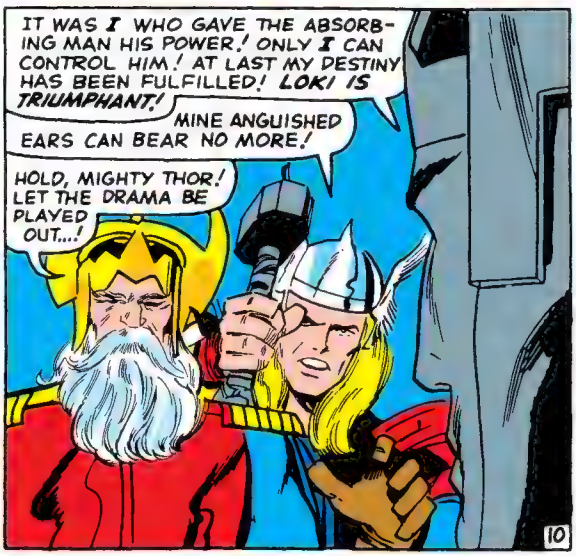

HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH! WHATEVER I HURL AT HIM--MY MOST POTENT, MOST DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES, ALL BECOME PART OF HIS OWN EVER-GROWING POWER!
STAY THY HAND, MY FATHER! WHATEVER ELSE YOU DO, LET IT BE DONE WITH THOR STANDING FIRM AT THY SIDE!


EXTRICATING HIMSELF WITH ARMS FAR STRONGER THAN ALL THE BULLDOZERS OF EARTH, THE THUNDER GOD HASTENS TO STAND WITH HIS LIEGE....!
ATTA BOY, GOLDILOCKS! YOU MAKE SCENE, TOO! I'M JUST ITCHIN' TO FLATTEN YOU AS WELL AS OL' WHITEY THERE!

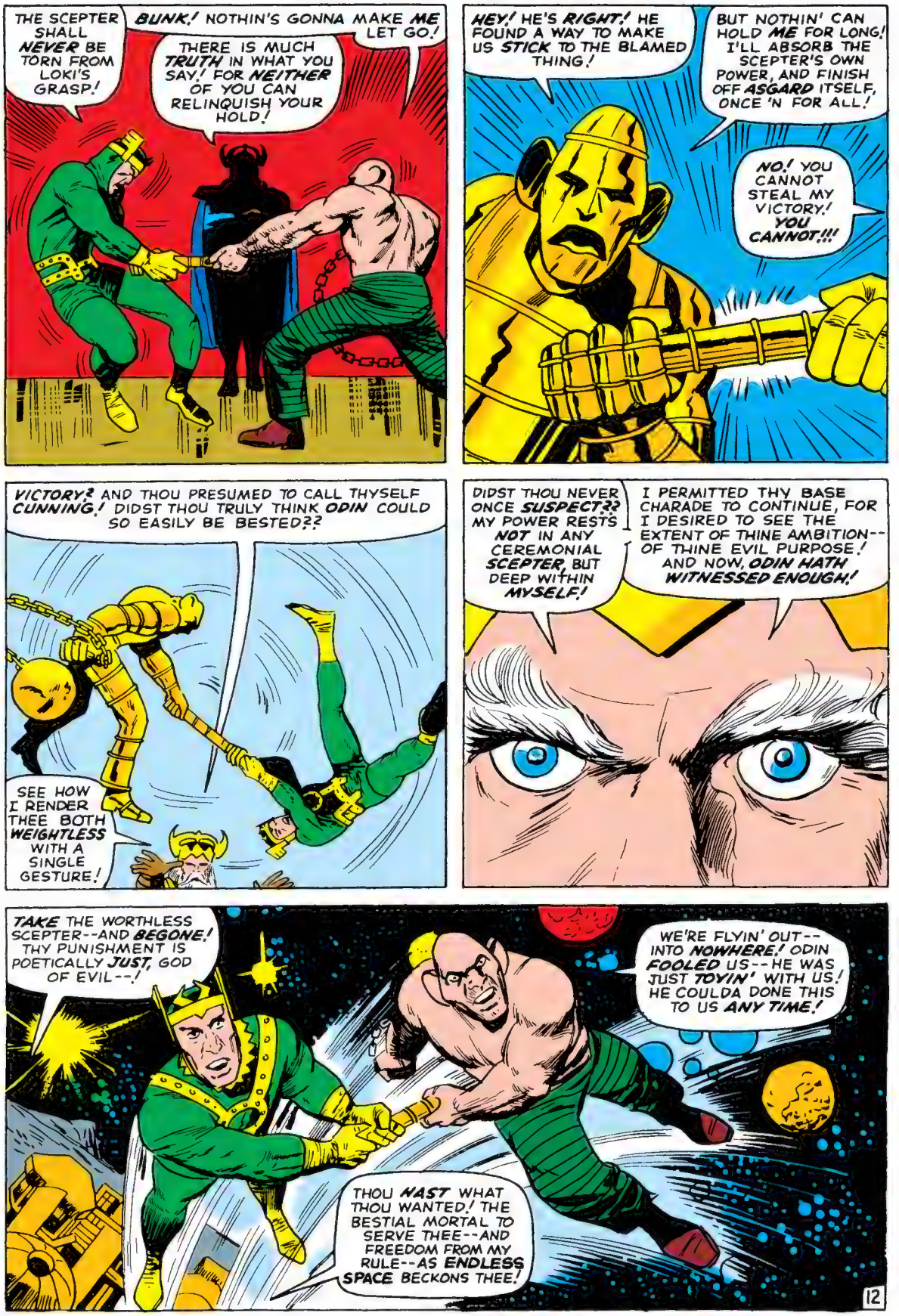

HOLD THY TONGUE! FOR EACH NEW INSOLENCE, YOU YET SHALL PAY A THOUSANDFOLD!


MISTER, YOU JUST THREATENED YOUR LAST THREAT! BUT, IF YOU WANNA GO OUT YAKKIN', THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS!
FINISH THE DEED, MORTAL! EVEN IN DEFEAT, ODIN IS NOT ONE TO TRIFLE WITH!
FATHER, SAY THE WORD! LET ME HUMBLE HIM FOREVER!
NOT YET, MY SON!

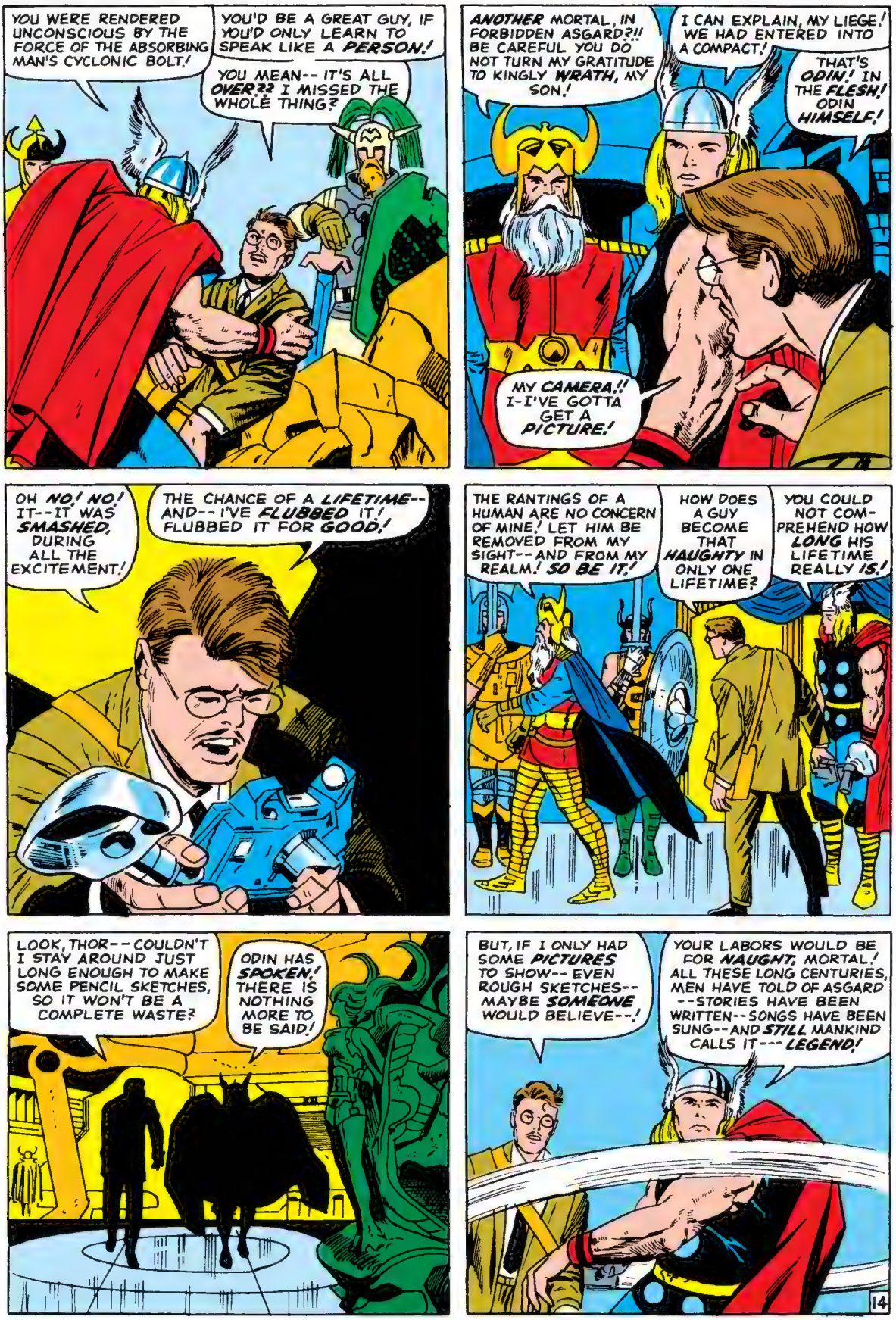
LOKI! ARE YOU THEN SO SURE OF YOURSELF THAT YOU DARE FLAUNT YOUR TREASON BEFORE MY VERY EYES??!
YOUR TIME HAS COME, STEP-FATHER! YOU HAVE RULED LONG ENOUGH! IT IS TIME YOU TOOK--YOUR REST!
ONLY THE STRONGEST MAY POSSESS THE SUPREME SCEPTER! LET IT NOW BE MINE!


IT WAS I WHO GAVE THE ABSORBING MAN HIS POWER! ONLY I CAN CONTROL HIM! AT LAST MY DESTINY HAS BEEN FULFILLED! LOKI IS TRIUMPHANT!
MINE ANGUISHED EARS CAN BEAR NO MORE!
HOLD, MIGHTY THOR! LET THE DRAMA BE PLAYED OUT....!

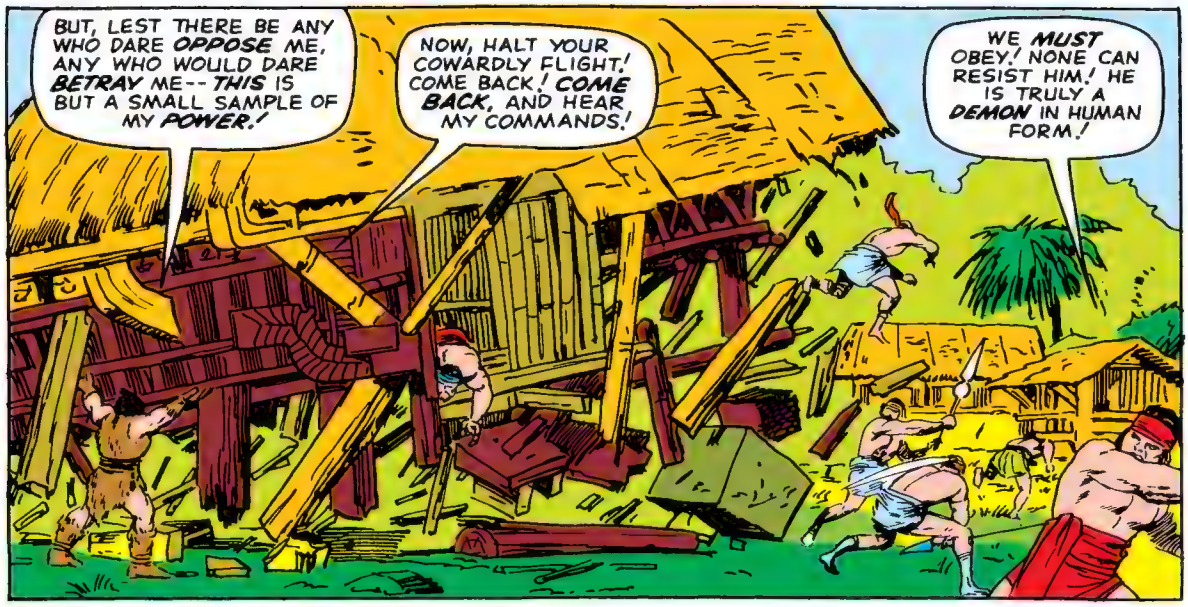
I HAVE NO WISH TO SEE MY KINGDOM DESTROYED! ALWAYS HAST THOU LUSTED FOR MY SCEPTER, EVIL ONE! THEN TAKE IT! LET IT BE THINE!
I KNEW YOU'D SURRENDER, RATHER THAN RISK A BATTLE WHICH COULD DESTROY YOUR BELOVED ASGARD!
I HAVE WON! THE UNIVERSE IS MINE TO COMMAND!
OH, MOST SHAMEFUL MOMENT! MOST PERFIDIOUS SIGHT!
THAT THE GLORY WHICH WAS ASGARD, SHOULD COME TO-- THIS!
I NOW PROCLAIM THE REIGN OF LOKI, THE CUNNING!
MORTAL, RETURN YOU TO NORMAL SIZE! HENCEFORTH, NONE SHALL TOWER OVER LOKI! ALL THAT LIVE MUST GROVEL BEFORE ME!
YOU BEEN LIVIN' IN A FOOL'S PARADISE, CHUM! I HAD TIME TO LEARN HOW POWERFUL I REALLY AM! THAT SCEPTER BELONGS TO ME!
WHAT?!! YOU DARE SULLY IT WITH MORTAL HAND?? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN IT WAS I WHO CREATED THE ABSORBING MAN??
AND, IT IS I ALONE WHO HAVE THE POWER TO DESTROY YOU!
I MEAN NO DISRESPECT, SIRE, BUT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR ABJECT SURRENDER! I STILL CAN REGAIN YON SCEPTER IF THOU BUT SAY THE WORD!
ANOTHER MOMENT'S PATIENCE, VALIANT ONE! THE PLAY IS NOT YET ENDED!


THE SCEPTER SHALL NEVER BE TORN FROM LOKI'S GRASP!
BUNK! NOTHIN'S GONNA MAKE ME LET GO!
THERE IS MUCH TRUTH IN WHAT YOU SAY! FOR NEITHER OF YOU CAN RELINQUISH YOUR HOLD!
HEY! HE'S RIGHT! HE FOUND A WAY TO MAKE US STICK TO THE BLAMED THING!
BUT NOTHIN' CAN HOLD ME FOR LONG! I'LL ABSORB THE SCEPTER'S OWN POWER, AND FINISH OFF ASGARD ITSELF, ONCE 'N FOR ALL!
NO! YOU CANNOT STEAL MY VICTORY! YOU CANNOT!!!
VICTORY? AND THOU PRESUMED TO CALL THYSELF CUNNING! DIDST THOU TRULY THINK ODIN COULD SO EASILY BE BESTED??
SEE HOW I RENDER THEE BOTH WEIGHTLESS WITH A SINGLE GESTURE!
DIDST THOU NEVER ONCE SUSPECT?? MY POWER RESTS NOT IN ANY CEREMONIAL SCEPTER, BUT DEEP WITHIN MYSELF!
I PERMITTED THY BASE CHARADE TO CONTINUE, FOR I DESIRED TO SEE THE EXTENT OF THINE AMBITION--OF THINE EVIL PURPOSE! AND NOW, ODIN HATH WITNESSED ENOUGH!
TAKE THE WORTHLESS SCEPTER--AND BEGONE! THY PUNISHMENT IS POETICALLY JUST, GOD OF EVIL--!
WE'RE FLYIN' OUT--INTO NOWHERE! ODIN FOOLED US--HE WAS JUST TOYIN' WITH US! HE COULDA DONE THIS TO US ANY TIME!
THOU NAST WHAT THOU WANTED! THE BESTIAL MORTAL TO SERVE THEE--AND FREEDOM FROM MY RULE--AS ENDLESS SPACE BECKONS THEE!

THY JOURNEY THRU THE VOID SHALL CONTINUE FOR SO LONG AS IT DOTH PLEASE ME!
NEITHER THE BURNING HEAT, NOR FREEZING COLD OF SPACE SHALL STOP THEE!
I HAVE SPOKEN!
THE HEART OF ODIN IS PROUD OF ASGARD'S WARRIORS! YOUR SOVEREIGN SALUTES THEE, ONE AND ALL!
AND THOU, MY SON, PROVED MOST COURAGEOUS OF ALL!
I, FATHER??
INDEED! IT IS FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO STAY THY ARM WHEN THY VERY SOUL CRIES OUT FOR COMBAT! BUT, THOU DIDST OBEY THY FATHER, AND HE IS MIGHTILY PLEASED!
NOBLE FATHER! I JUST REMEMBERED --THE MORTAL!
MORTAL??
WHA- WHAT HAPPENED ??
13

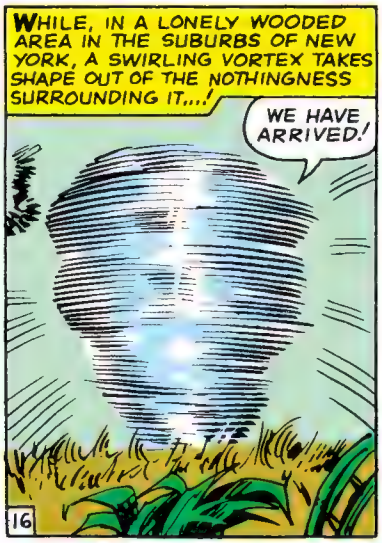

YOU WERE RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS BY THE FORCE OF THE ABSORBING MAN'S CYCLONIC BOLT!
YOU'D BE A GREAT GUY, IF YOU'D ONLY LEARN TO SPEAK LIKE A PERSON!
YOU MEAN-- IT'S ALL OVER?? I MISSED THE WHOLE THING?
ANOTHER MORTAL, IN FORBIDDEN ASGARD?! BE CAREFUL YOU DO NOT TURN MY GRATITUDE TO KINGLY WRATH, MY SON!
I CAN EXPLAIN, MY LIEGE! WE HAD ENTERED INTO A COMPACT!
THAT'S ODIN! IN THE FLESH! ODIN HIMSELF!
MY CAMERA!! I-I'VE GOTTA GET A PICTURE!
OH NO! NO! IT--IT WAS SMASHED, DURING ALL THE EXCITEMENT!
THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME-- AND-- I'VE FLUBBED IT! FLUBBED IT FOR GOOD!
THE RANTINGS OF A HUMAN ARE NO CONCERN OF MINE! LET HIM BE REMOVED FROM MY SIGHT--AND FROM MY REALM! SO BE IT!
HOW DOES A GUY BECOME THAT HAUGHTY IN ONLY ONE LIFETIME?
YOU COULD NOT COMPREHEND HOW LONG HIS LIFETIME REALLY IS!
LOOK, THOR--COULDN'T I STAY AROUND JUST LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE SOME PENCIL SKETCHES, SO IT WON'T BE A COMPLETE WASTE?
ODIN HAS SPOKEN! THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID!
BUT, IF I ONLY HAD SOME PICTURES TO SHOW-- EVEN ROUGH SKETCHES-- MAYBE SOMEONE WOULD BELIEVE--!
YOUR LABORS WOULD BE FOR NAUGHT, MORTAL! ALL THESE LONG CENTURIES, MEN HAVE TOLD OF ASGARD --STORIES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN--SONGS HAVE BEEN SUNG--AND STILL MANKIND CALLS IT--- LEGEND!
14

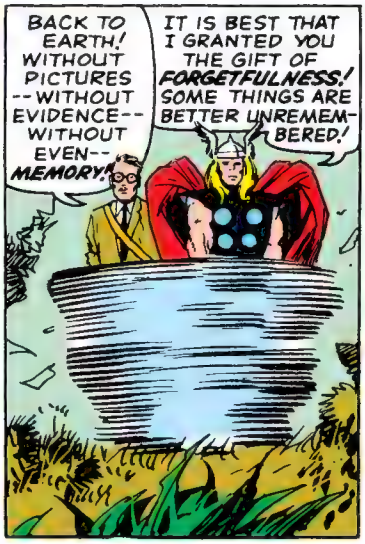
BUT NOW, AS THOR PREPARES FOR THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO EARTH, LET US RETURN TO A LONELY PLATEAU, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MONGOLIA...
TO YOUR POSTS! SEIZE YOUR WEAPONS! HE COMES! THE DEMON OF THE JUNGLE APPROACHES!
IF OUR BOLTED GATE DOES NOT STOP HIM, WE ARE LOST!
BRAK!!
FLEE!! FLEE!! HE SHATTERS THE HEAVY TIMBERS AS THOUGH THEY BE STRAW!
STOP! STAY WHERE YOU ARE! YOU MUST NOT FEAR ME!
THE GODS HAVE GIVEN ME A MISSION-- AND YOU SHALL HELP ME CARRY IT OUT!
15

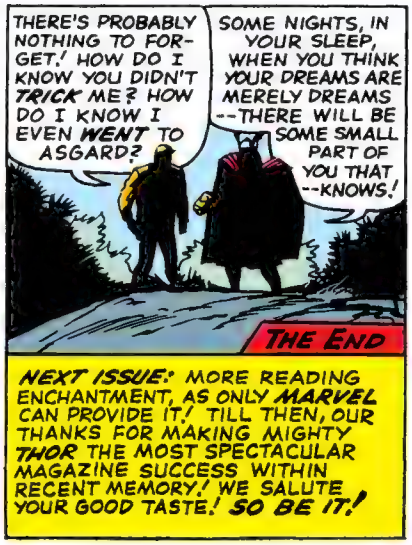

BUT, LEST THERE BE ANY WHO DARE OPPOSE ME, ANY WHO WOULD DARE BETRAY ME-- THIS IS BUT A SMALL SAMPLE OF MY POWER!
NOW, HALT YOUR COWARDLY FLIGHT! COME BACK! COME BACK, AND HEAR MY COMMANDS!
WE MUST OBEY! NONE CAN RESIST HIM! HE IS TRULY A DEMON IN HUMAN FORM!

A DEMON YOU HAVE CALLED ME -- AND A DEMON SHALL I BE! BOW DOWN, BEFORE THE MAJESTY OF YOUR LEADER -- BEFORE THE POWER OF -- THE DEMON!
YOU ARE BUT THE FIRST -- THE FIRST OF AN ARMY OF MILLIONS WHICH I SHALL RECRUIT, TO OVERRUN THE WORLD! A WORLD WHICH WILL SOON BOW IN HOMAGE TO THE DEMON, EVEN AS YOU DO, NOW!

THUS, WITH THE ENCHANTED NORN STONE STILL IN HIS GRASP, THE MASKED MAN FALLS DEEPER AND DEEPER UNDER ITS SPELL, AS THE GLINT OF DEMONIACAL MADNESS GLEAMS BRIGHTER IN HIS FANATICAL EYES....!
...EYES THAT ARE SOON DESTINED TO GAZE AT THOR WITH THE SAME POWER, THE SAME HATRED AS NOW SEEM TO NOURISH HE WHOM FATE HAS NAMED -- THE DEMON!

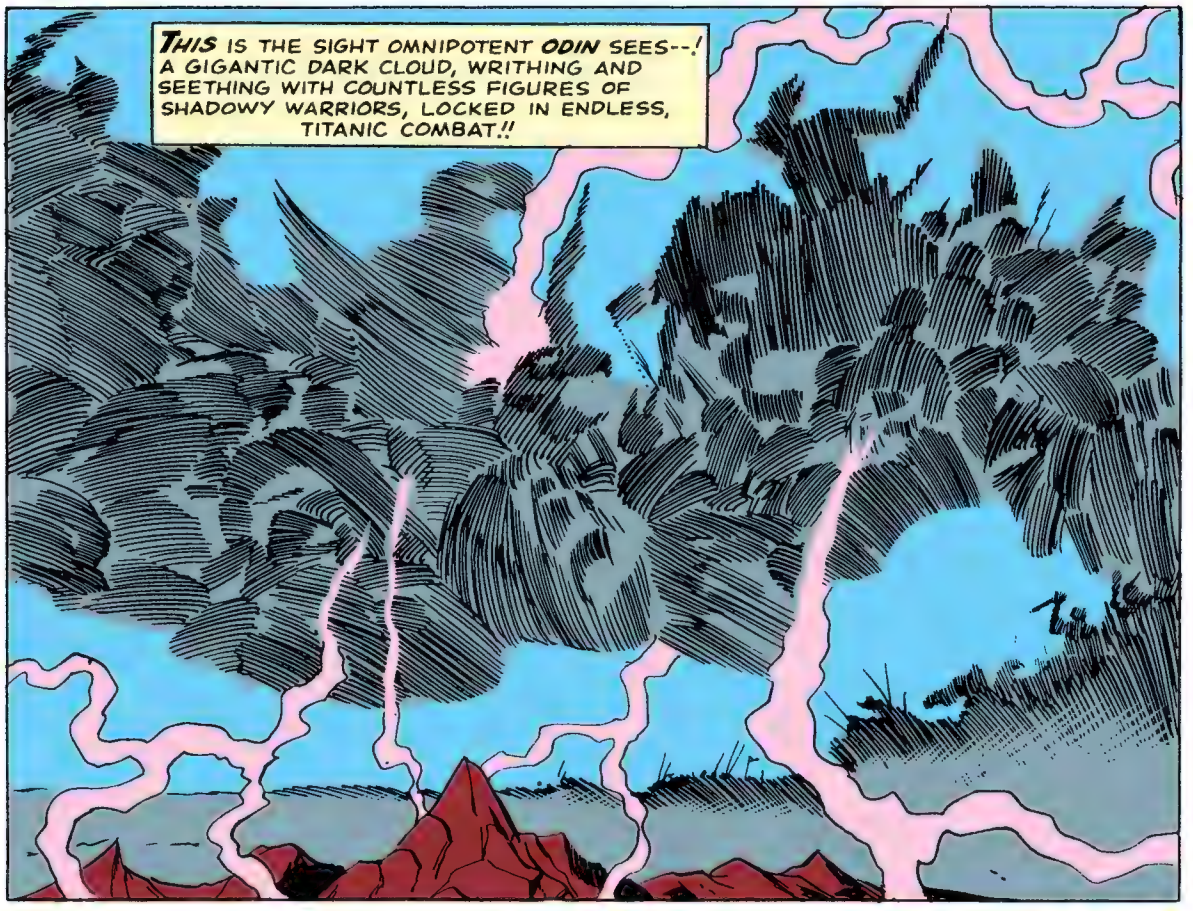

WHILE, IN A LONELY WOODED AREA IN THE SUBURBS OF NEW YORK, A SWIRLING VORTEX TAKES SHAPE OUT OF THE NOTHINGNESS SURROUNDING IT....!
WE HAVE ARRIVED!

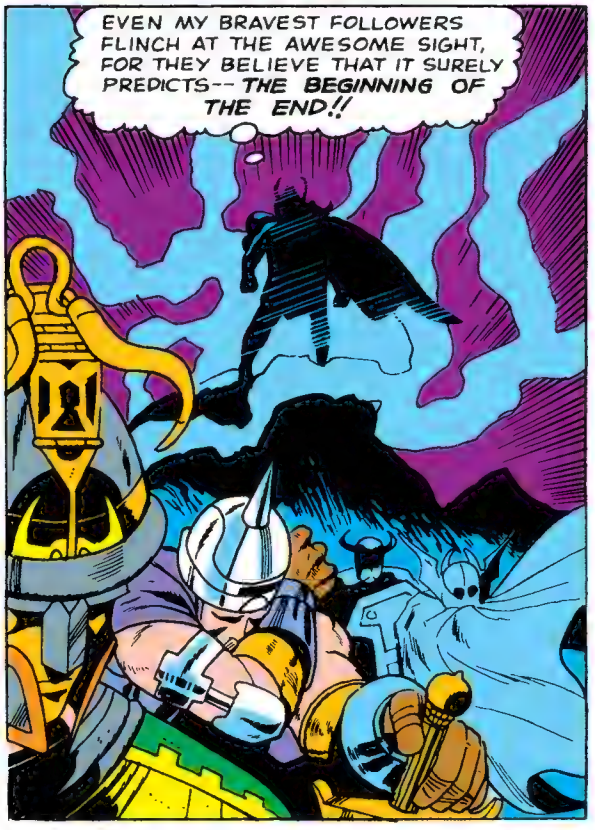

BACK TO EARTH! WITHOUT PICTURES -- WITHOUT EVIDENCE -- WITHOUT EVEN -- MEMORY!
IT IS BEST THAT I GRANTED YOU THE GIFT OF FORGETFULNESS! SOME THINGS ARE BETTER UNREMEMBERED!

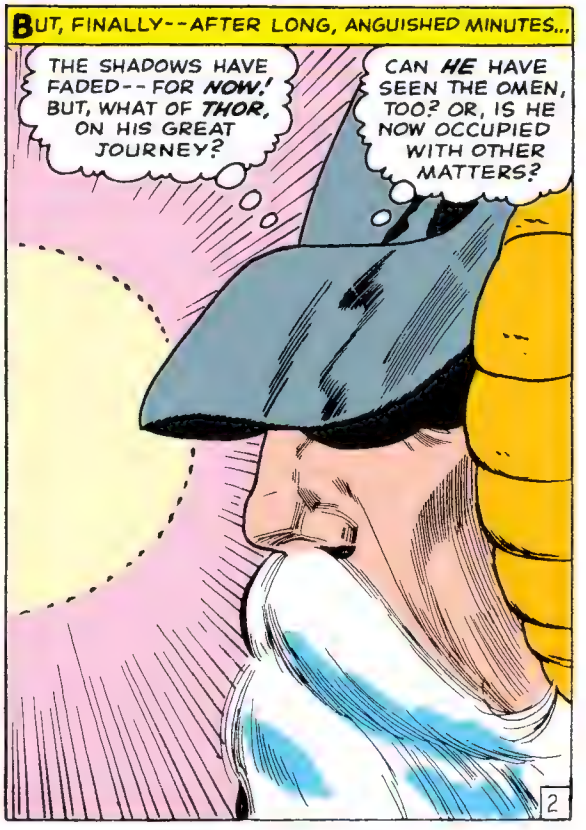

THERE'S PROBABLY NOTHING TO FORGET! HOW DO I KNOW YOU DIDN'T TRICK ME? HOW DO I KNOW I EVEN WENT TO ASGARD?
SOME NIGHTS, IN YOUR SLEEP, WHEN YOU THINK YOUR DREAMS ARE MERELY DREAMS -- THERE WILL BE SOME SMALL PART OF YOU THAT -- KNOWS!
THE END

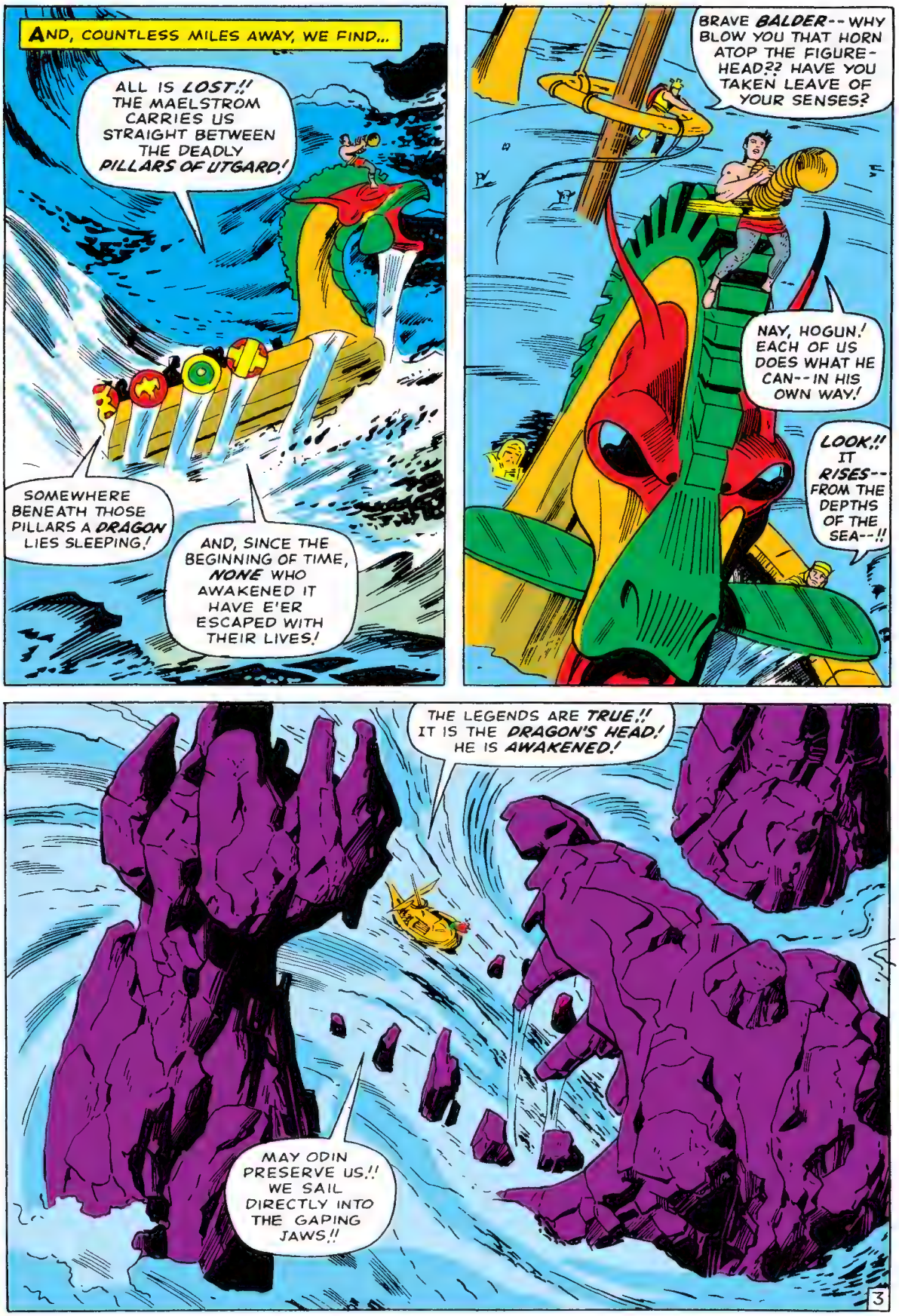
NEXT ISSUE: MORE READING ENCHANTMENT, AS ONLY MARVEL CAN PROVIDE IT! TILL THEN, OUR THANKS FOR MAKING MIGHTY THOR THE MOST SPECTACULAR MAGAZINE SUCCESS WITHIN RECENT MEMORY! WE SALUTE YOUR GOOD TASTE! SO BE IT!

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS
"THE JAWS OF THE DRAGON!"
EVEN AS THOR'S MUTINOUS CREW OF ARGONAUTS HEADS INTO THE DREADED PILLARS OF UTGARD ON THE UNCHARTED SEA OF FEAR... BACK IN ASGARD, REGAL ODIN, ATOP THE TALLEST PEAK IN THE UNIVERSE, SEES A TERRIFYING SIGHT...!
ON THE FAR HORIZON... A SIGHT TO STAGGER THE SENSES OF A GOD!
AN EXPERIENCE IN MATCHLESS SPECTACLE, AS ONLY STAN LEE, WRITER, JACK KIRBY, PENCILLER, VINCE COLLETTA, INKER, ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER, COULD CREATE IT!
MOST NOBLE LORD... BEHOLD! I SEE OMINOUS SIGNS AND PORTENTS AHEAD... OMENS OF THE COMING OF RAGNAROK!*
*RAGNAROK: THE END OF THE WORLD! THE DAY ON WHICH EVEN THE GODS SHALL PERISH!
1

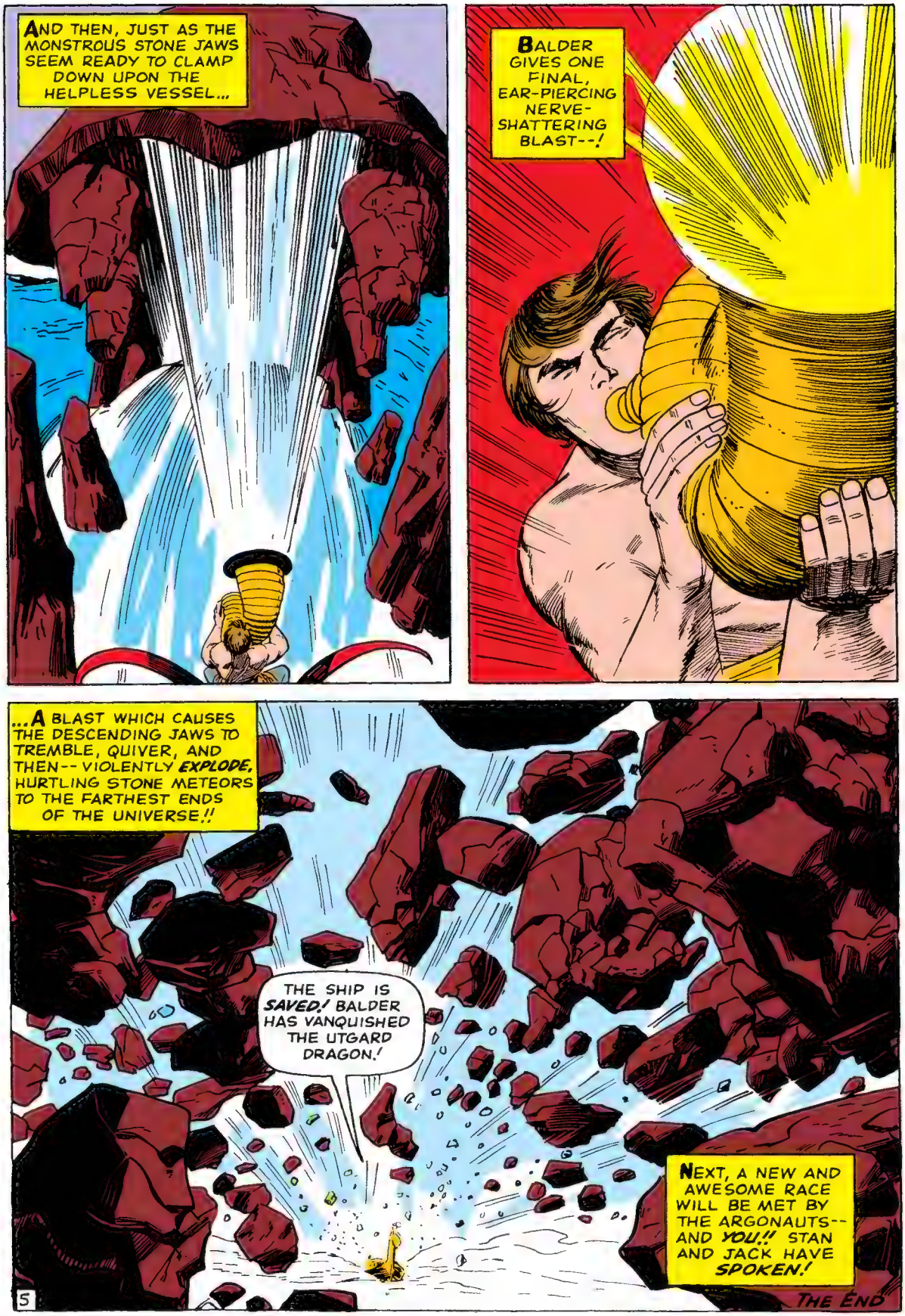

THIS IS THE SIGHT OMNIPOTENT ODIN SEES--! A GIGANTIC DARK CLOUD, WRITHING AND SEETHING WITH COUNTLESS FIGURES OF SHADOWY WARRIORS, LOCKED IN ENDLESS, TITANIC COMBAT!!


EVEN MY BRAVEST FOLLOWERS FLINCH AT THE AWESOME SIGHT, FOR THEY BELIEVE THAT IT SURELY PREDICTS-- THE BEGINNING OF THE END!!


BUT, FINALLY--AFTER LONG, ANGUISHED MINUTES...
THE SHADOWS HAVE FADED--FOR NOW! BUT, WHAT OF THOR, ON HIS GREAT JOURNEY?
CAN HE HAVE SEEN THE OMEN, TOO? OR, IS HE NOW OCCUPIED WITH OTHER MATTERS?

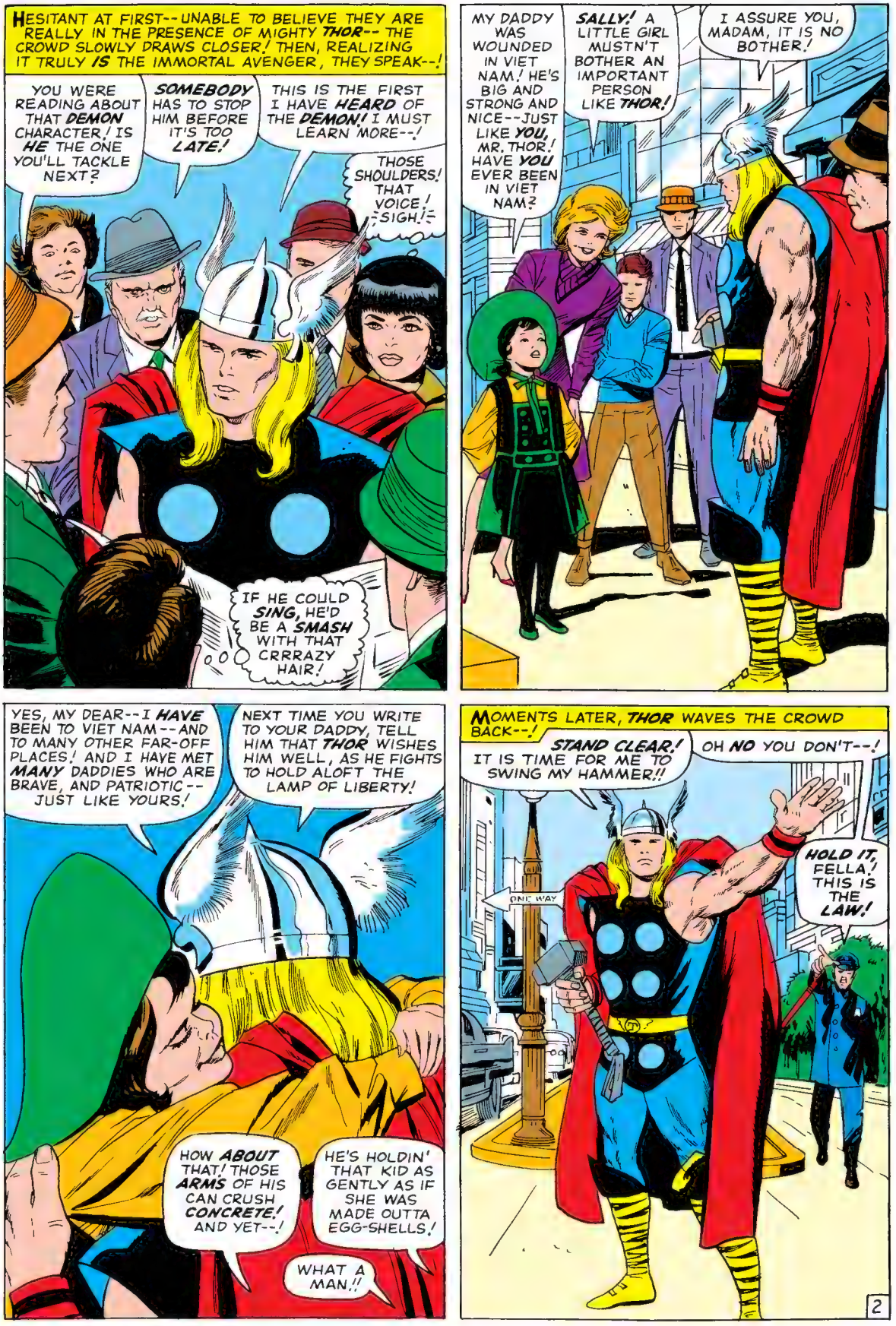

AND, COUNTLESS MILES AWAY, WE FIND...
ALL IS LOST!! THE MAELSTROM CARRIES US STRAIGHT BETWEEN THE DEADLY PILLARS OF UTGARD!
SOMEWHERE BENEATH THOSE PILLARS A DRAGON LIES SLEEPING!
AND, SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME, NONE WHO AWAKENED IT HAVE E'ER ESCAPED WITH THEIR LIVES!
BRAVE BALDER--WHY BLOW YOU THAT HORN ATOP THE FIGURE-HEAD?? HAVE YOU TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES?
NAY, HOGUN! EACH OF US DOES WHAT HE CAN--IN HIS OWN WAY!
LOOK!! IT RISES--FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA--!!
THE LEGENDS ARE TRUE!! IT IS THE DRAGON'S HEAD! HE IS AWAKENED!
MAY ODIN PRESERVE US!! WE SAIL DIRECTLY INTO THE GAPING JAWS!!

GOD OF THUNDER--SAVE US! FOR TRULY, YOU ALONE ARE OUR ONLY HOPE!
WHAT FLESH AND BLOOD CAN ACHIEVE, I SHALL DO! THIS DO I PLEDGE TO ALL!
WHATE'ER BEFALLS, I SHALL NOT FLINCH! STRIKE, THOU CREATURE OF DARKNESS --THOR STANDS READY!
BUT SUDDENLY, THE MAST BENEATH HIS FEET SPLINTERS AND CRUMBLES, HURLING THE MIGHTY IMMORTAL OFF-BALANCE!
KRAK!
AND, AS THE SEEMINGLY-DOOMED SHIP APPROACHES THE DRAGON'S JAWS, ONLY THE STRANGE NOTES FROM BALDER'S HORN CAN BE HEARD OVER THE SHRIEKING OF THE CATACLYSMIC STORM--!

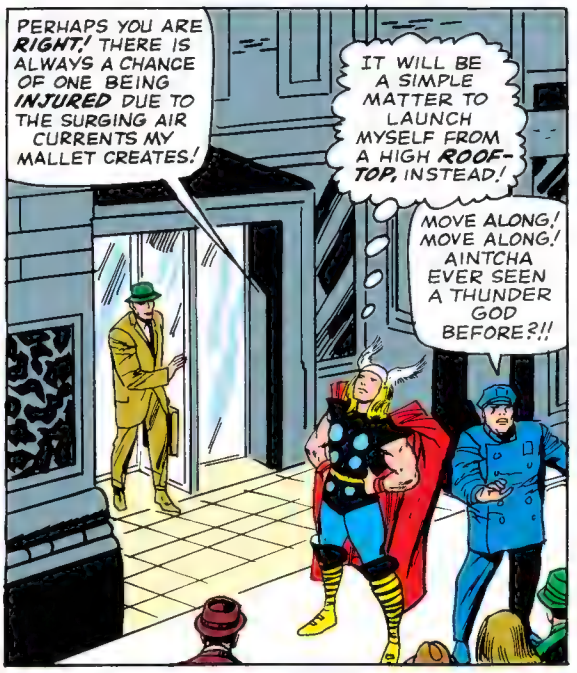

AND THEN, JUST AS THE MONSTROUS STONE JAWS SEEM READY TO CLAMP DOWN UPON THE HELPLESS VESSEL...
BALDER GIVES ONE FINAL, EAR-PIERCING NERVE-SHATTERING BLAST--!
...A BLAST WHICH CAUSES THE DESCENDING JAWS TO TREMBLE, QUIVER, AND THEN-- VIOLENTLY EXPLODE, HURTLING STONE METEORS TO THE FARTHEST ENDS OF THE UNIVERSE!!
THE SHIP IS SAVED! BALDER HAS VANQUISHED THE UTGARD DRAGON!
NEXT, A NEW AND AWESOME RACE WILL BE MET BY THE ARGONAUTS-- AND YOU!! STAN AND JACK HAVE SPOKEN!
THE END
5

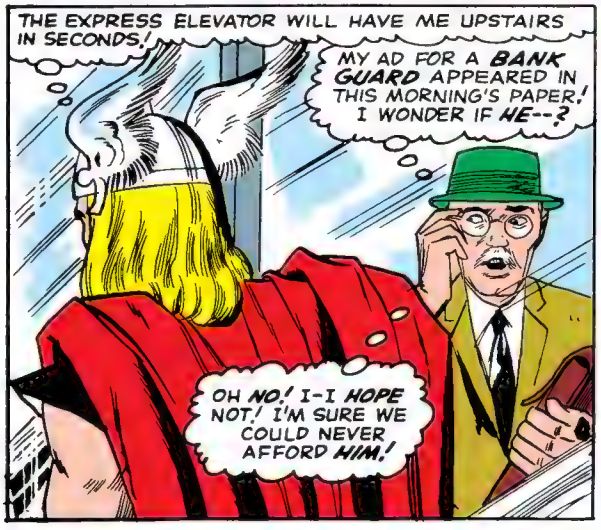
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
124
JAN
12¢
ENTER
HERCULES!
"THE GLORY AND THE GRANDEUR!"

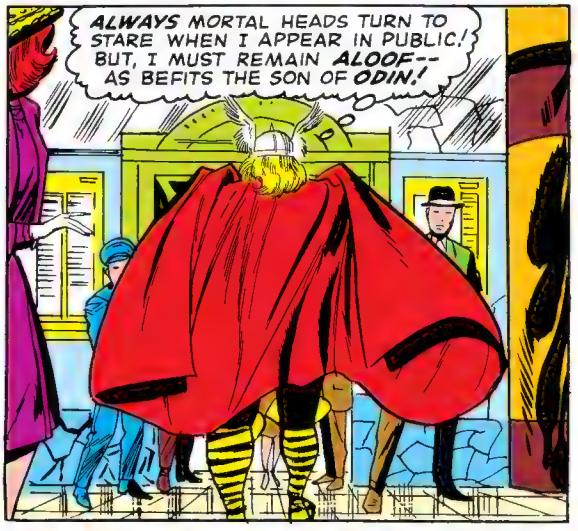
THE MIGHTY THOR!
"THE GRANDEUR AND THE GLORY!"
BACK PAGE SPECIAL!!
UNKNOWN "DEMON" UNLEASHES PLUNDERING JUNGLE HORDES
REPORTS OF MAYHEM!!
ANYBODY CAN STOP TO READ A NEWSPAPER ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK! BUT, WHEN THE TALL, IMPOSING FIGURE OF THE GOD OF THUNDER DOES IT, PEOPLE HAVE A WAY OF NOTICING...!
STORY BY: STAN (THE MAN) LEE
PENCILLING BY: JACK (KING) KIRBY
DELINEATION BY: VINCE (THE PRINCE) COLLETTA
LETTERING BY: ARTIE (SUGAR LIPS) SIMEK


HESITANT AT FIRST--UNABLE TO BELIEVE THEY ARE REALLY IN THE PRESENCE OF MIGHTY THOR-- THE CROWD SLOWLY DRAWS CLOSER! THEN, REALIZING IT TRULY IS THE IMMORTAL AVENGER, THEY SPEAK--!
YOU WERE READING ABOUT THAT DEMON CHARACTER! IS HE THE ONE YOU'LL TACKLE NEXT?
SOMEBODY HAS TO STOP HIM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
THIS IS THE FIRST I HAVE HEARD OF THE DEMON! I MUST LEARN MORE--!
THOSE SHOULDERS! THAT VOICE! =SIGH!=
IF HE COULD SING, HE'D BE A SMASH WITH THAT CRRRAZY HAIR!
MY DADDY WAS WOUNDED IN VIET NAM! HE'S BIG AND STRONG AND NICE--JUST LIKE YOU, MR. THOR! HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN VIET NAM?
SALLY! A LITTLE GIRL MUSTN'T BOTHER AN IMPORTANT PERSON LIKE THOR!
I ASSURE YOU, MADAM, IT IS NO BOTHER!
YES, MY DEAR--I HAVE BEEN TO VIET NAM--AND TO MANY OTHER FAR-OFF PLACES! AND I HAVE MET MANY DADDIES WHO ARE BRAVE, AND PATRIOTIC--JUST LIKE YOURS!
NEXT TIME YOU WRITE TO YOUR DADDY, TELL HIM THAT THOR WISHES HIM WELL, AS HE FIGHTS TO HOLD ALOFT THE LAMP OF LIBERTY!
HOW ABOUT THAT! THOSE ARMS OF HIS CAN CRUSH CONCRETE! AND YET--!
HE'S HOLDIN' THAT KID AS GENTLY AS IF SHE WAS MADE OUTTA EGG-SHELLS!
WHAT A MAN!!
MOMENTS LATER, THOR WAVES THE CROWD BACK--!
STAND CLEAR! IT IS TIME FOR ME TO SWING MY HAMMER!!
OH NO YOU DON'T--!
HOLD IT, FELLA! THIS IS THE LAW!
ONE WAY
2

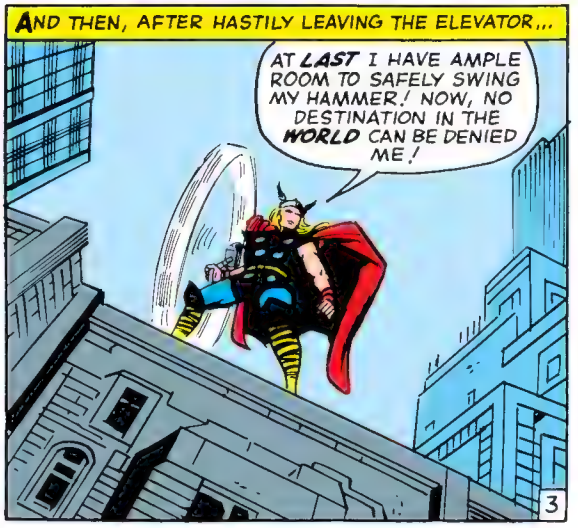
LET'S SEE YOUR LICENSE TO GIVE A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION IN THE STREET!
LICENSE?? I HAVE NO LICENSE! I AM THOR!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE MOTHER HUBBARD! YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO ANY HAMMER-SWINGIN' ON MY BEAT, MISTER!

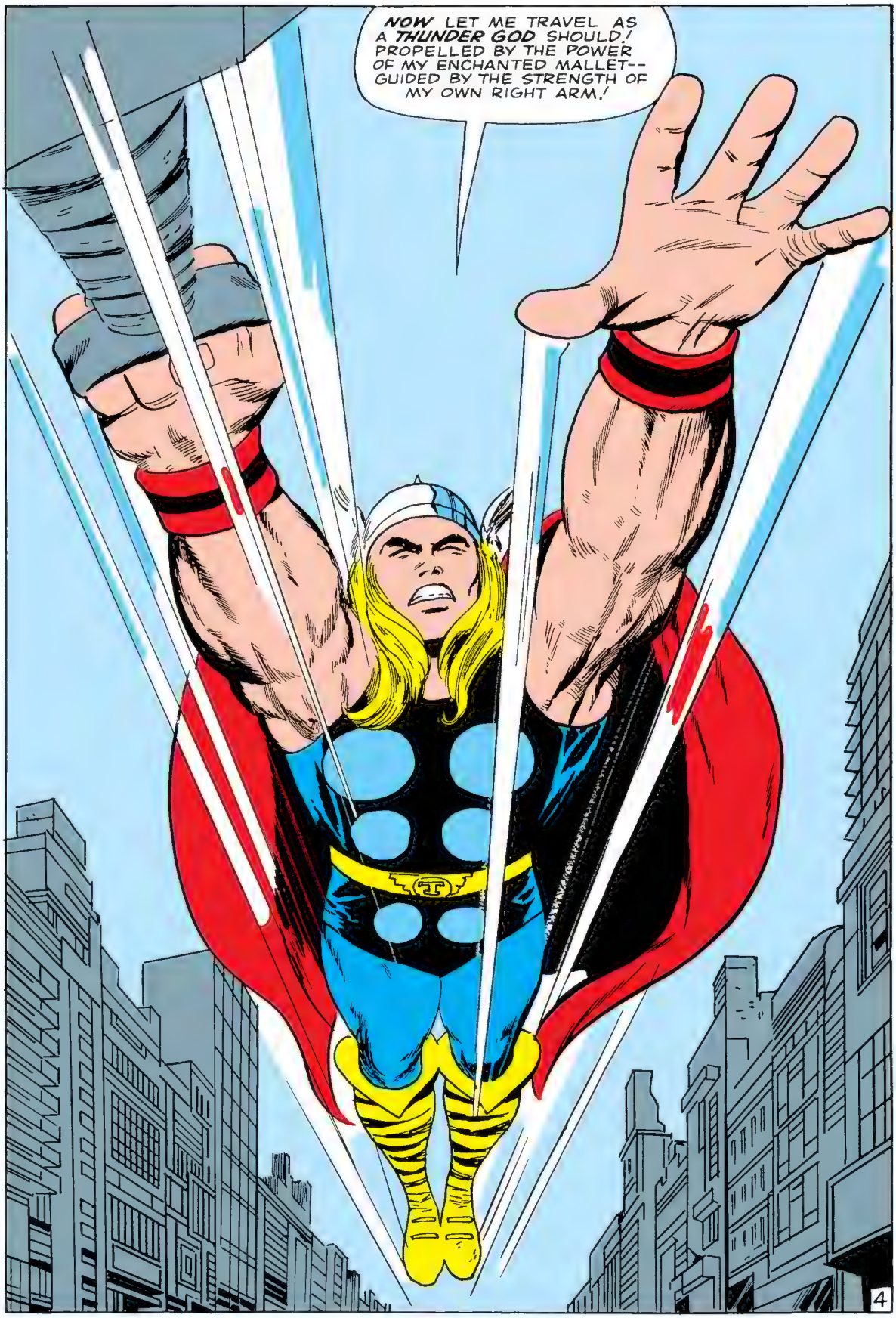

PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT! THERE IS ALWAYS A CHANCE OF ONE BEING INJURED DUE TO THE SURGING AIR CURRENTS MY MALLET CREATES!
IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO LAUNCH MYSELF FROM A HIGH ROOF-TOP, INSTEAD!
MOVE ALONG! MOVE ALONG! AINTCHA EVER SEEN A THUNDER GOD BEFORE?!!

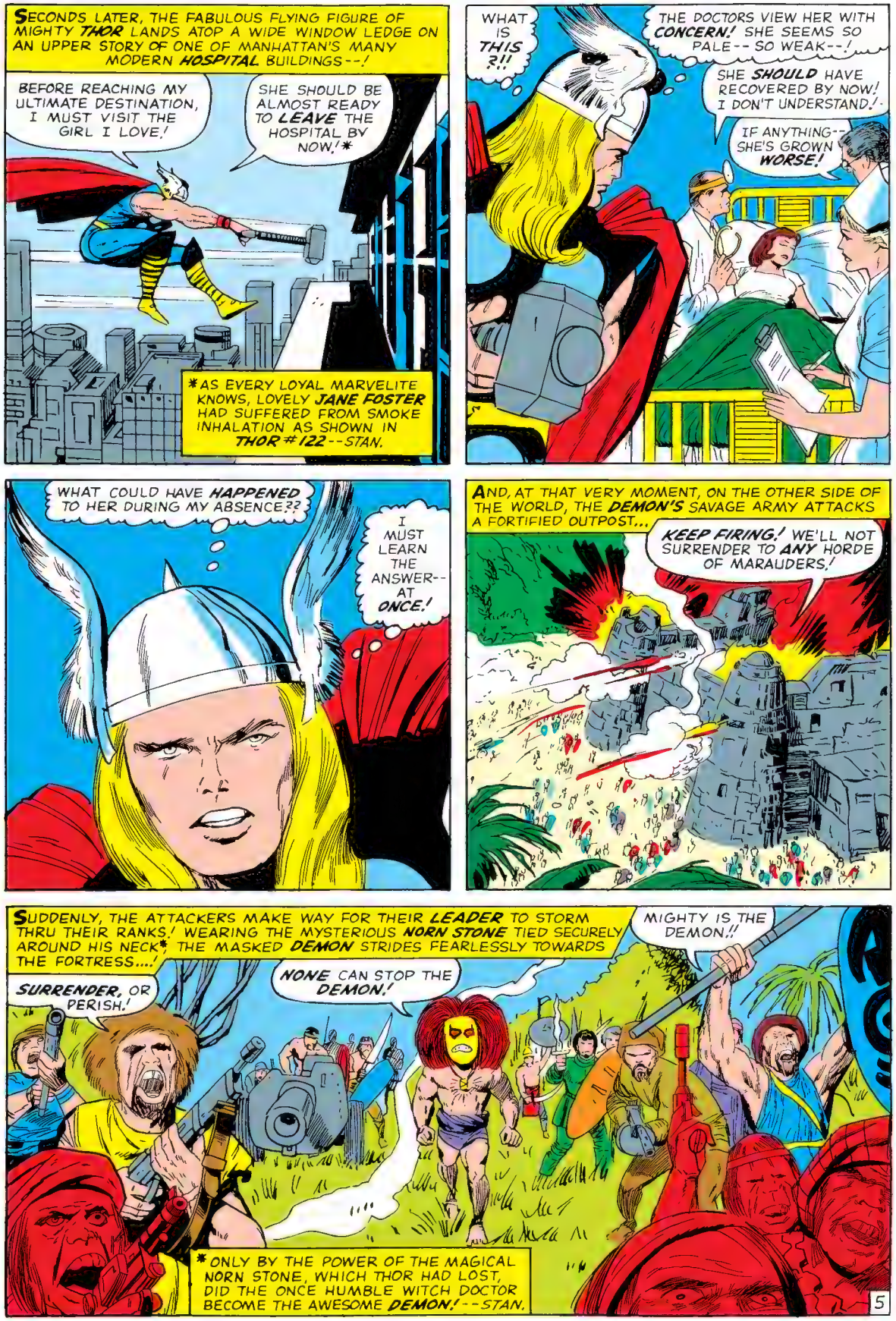

THE EXPRESS ELEVATOR WILL HAVE ME UPSTAIRS IN SECONDS!
MY AD FOR A BANK GUARD APPEARED IN THIS MORNING'S PAPER! I WONDER IF HE--?
OH NO! I-I HOPE NOT! I'M SURE WE COULD NEVER AFFORD HIM!

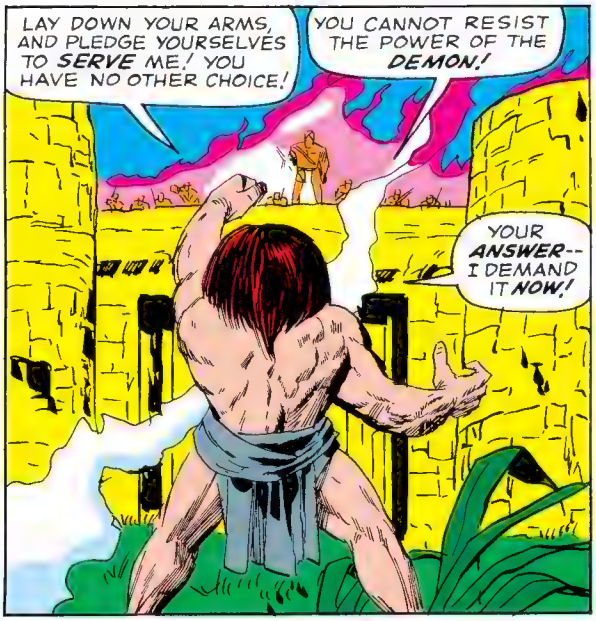

ALWAYS MORTAL HEADS TURN TO STARE WHEN I APPEAR IN PUBLIC! BUT, I MUST REMAIN ALOOF-- AS BEFITS THE SON OF ODIN!

I'VE SEEN CHARACTERS PARADING AROUND TOWN SHAVED LIKE MR. CLEAN... AND TEENAGERS WHO LOOK LIKE THE BEATLES... BUT THAT GUY TAKES THE CAKE!
S-STEP TO THE R-REAR OF THE CAR--IF Y-YOU DON'T MIND--THAT IS--!
THAT REMINDS ME--I'M DUE FOR A PERMANENT AT NOON!

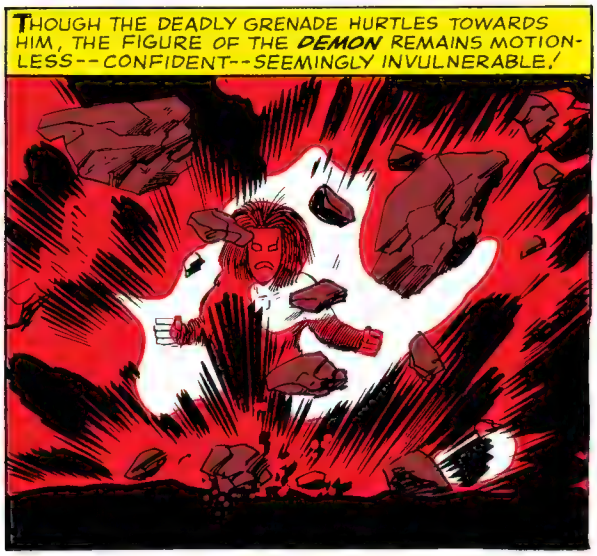

AND THEN, AFTER HASTILY LEAVING THE ELEVATOR...
AT LAST I HAVE AMPLE ROOM TO SAFELY SWING MY HAMMER! NOW, NO DESTINATION IN THE WORLD CAN BE DENIED ME!

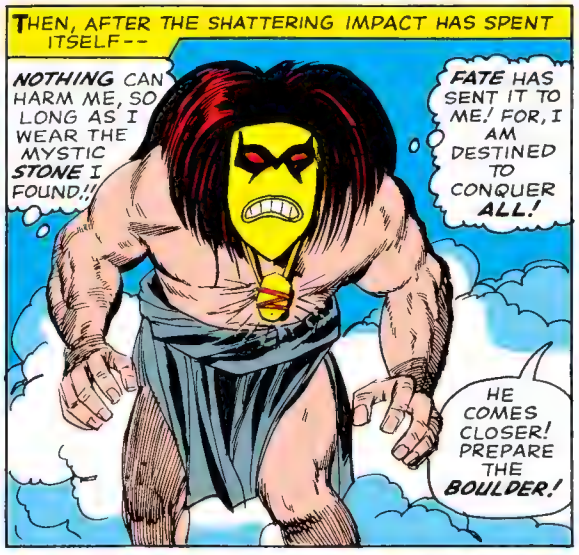

NOW LET ME TRAVEL AS A THUNDER GOD SHOULD! PROPELLED BY THE POWER OF MY ENCHANTED MALLET-- GUIDED BY THE STRENGTH OF MY OWN RIGHT ARM!

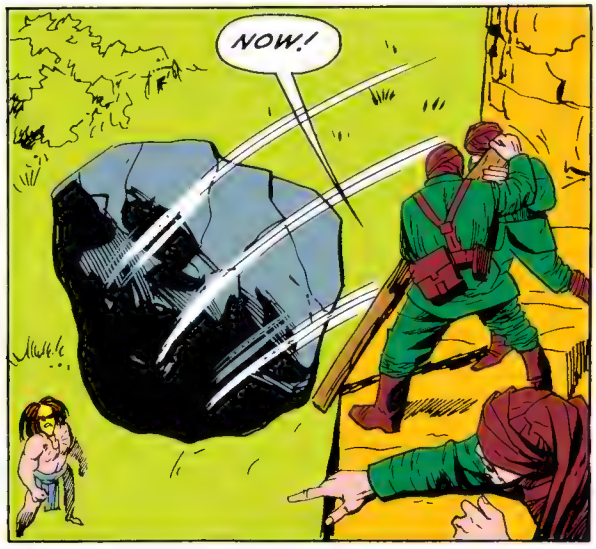

SECONDS LATER, THE FABULOUS FLYING FIGURE OF MIGHTY THOR LANDS ATOP A WIDE WINDOW LEDGE ON AN UPPER STORY OF ONE OF MANHATTAN'S MANY MODERN HOSPITAL BUILDINGS--!
BEFORE REACHING MY ULTIMATE DESTINATION, I MUST VISIT THE GIRL I LOVE!
SHE SHOULD BE ALMOST READY TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL BY NOW!*
*AS EVERY LOYAL MARVELITE KNOWS, LOVELY JANE FOSTER HAD SUFFERED FROM SMOKE INHALATION AS SHOWN IN THOR #122--STAN.
WHAT IS THIS ?!!
THE DOCTORS VIEW HER WITH CONCERN! SHE SEEMS SO PALE-- SO WEAK--!
SHE SHOULD HAVE RECOVERED BY NOW! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
IF ANYTHING-- SHE'S GROWN WORSE!
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HER DURING MY ABSENCE??
I MUST LEARN THE ANSWER-- AT ONCE!
AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, THE DEMON'S SAVAGE ARMY ATTACKS A FORTIFIED OUTPOST...
KEEP FIRING! WE'LL NOT SURRENDER TO ANY HORDE OF MARAUDERS!
SUDDENLY, THE ATTACKERS MAKE WAY FOR THEIR LEADER TO STORM THRU THEIR RANKS! WEARING THE MYSTERIOUS NORN STONE TIED SECURELY AROUND HIS NECK*, THE MASKED DEMON STRIDES FEARLESSLY TOWARDS THE FORTRESS...!
MIGHTY IS THE DEMON!!
SURRENDER, OR PERISH!
NONE CAN STOP THE DEMON!
*ONLY BY THE POWER OF THE MAGICAL NORN STONE, WHICH THOR HAD LOST, DID THE ONCE HUMBLE WITCH DOCTOR BECOME THE AWESOME DEMON!--STAN.
5

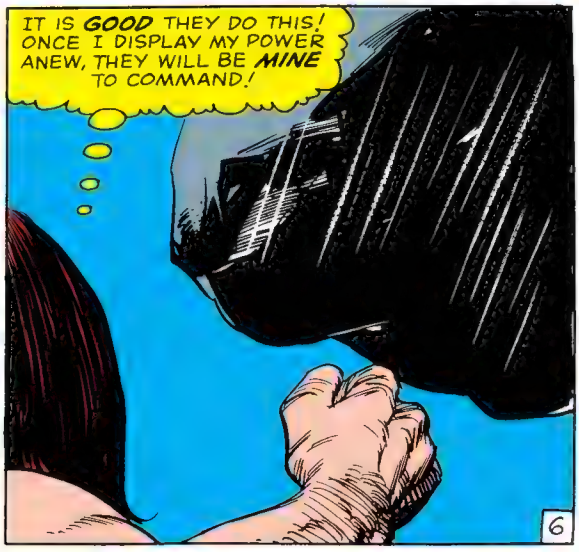

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS, AND PLEDGE YOURSELVES TO SERVE ME! YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE!
YOU CANNOT RESIST THE POWER OF THE DEMON!
YOUR ANSWER-- I DEMAND IT NOW!

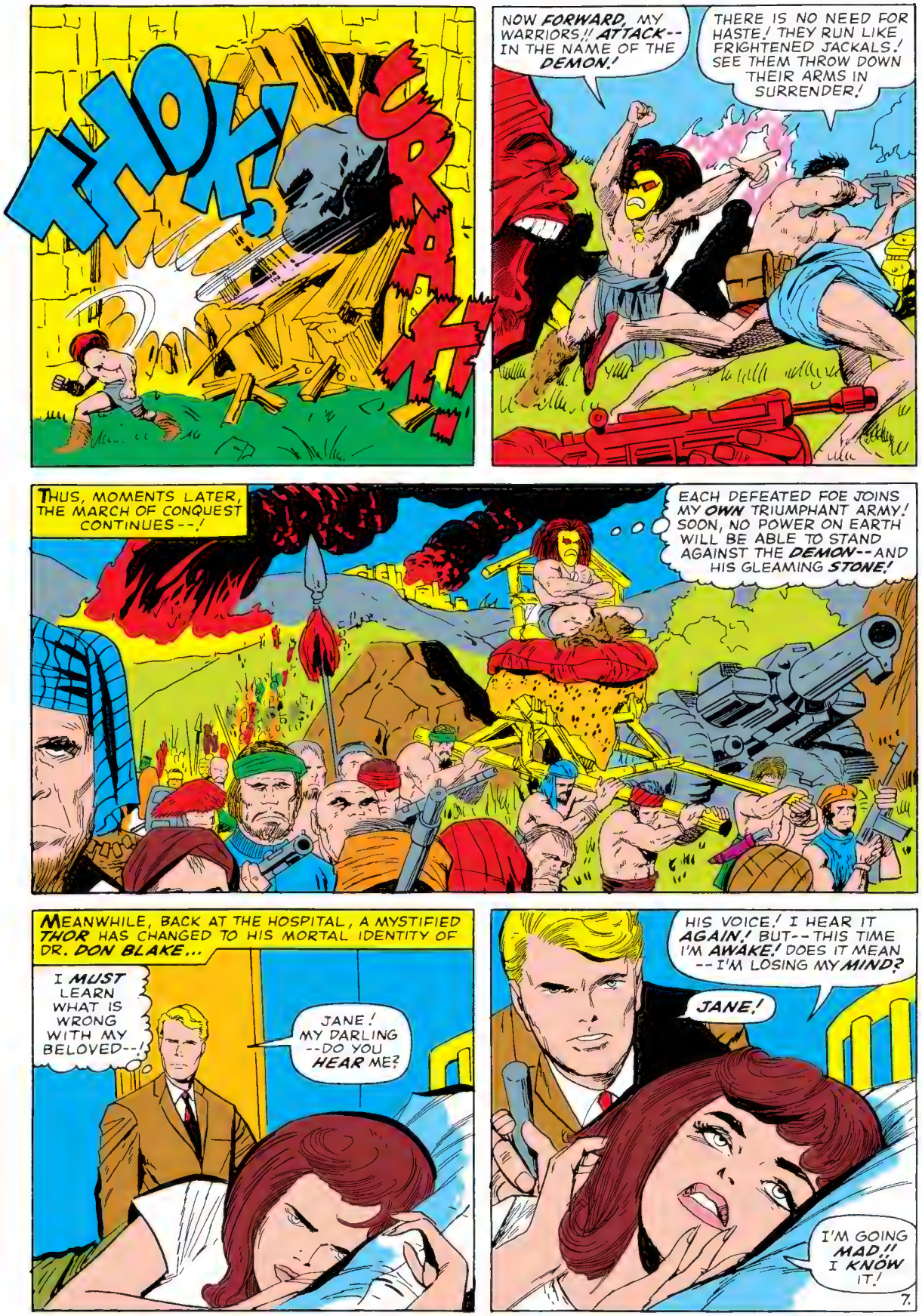
YOU SHALL HAVE IT, MADMAN!! THIS IS OUR ANSWER! WE SHALL FIGHT TILL THE LAST MAN!

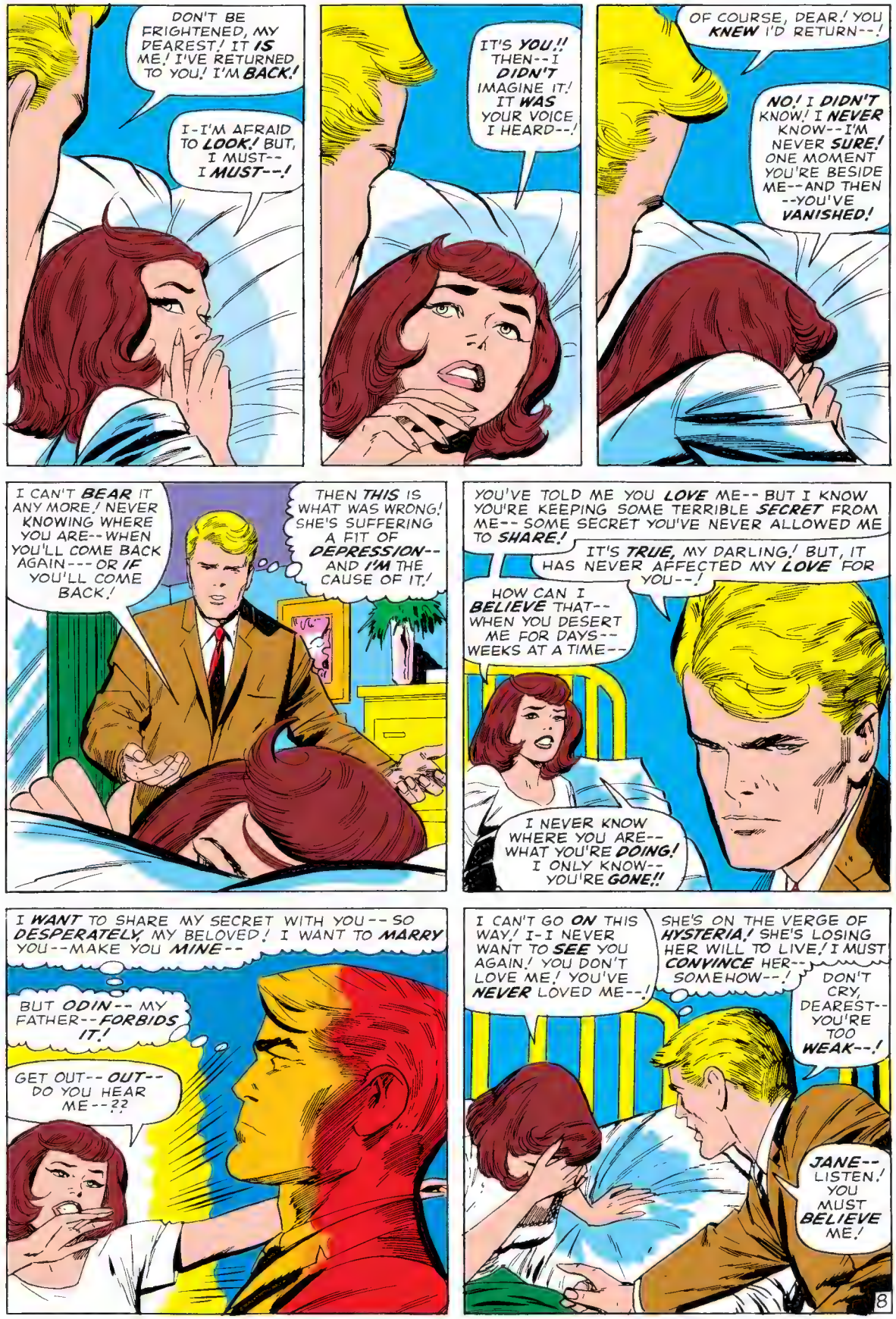

THOUGH THE DEADLY GRENADE HURTLES TOWARDS HIM, THE FIGURE OF THE DEMON REMAINS MOTIONLESS--CONFIDENT--SEEMINGLY INVULNERABLE!


THEN, AFTER THE SHATTERING IMPACT HAS SPENT ITSELF--
NOTHING CAN HARM ME, SO LONG AS I WEAR THE MYSTIC STONE I FOUND!!
FATE HAS SENT IT TO ME! FOR, I AM DESTINED TO CONQUER ALL!
HE COMES CLOSER! PREPARE THE BOULDER!


NOW!


IT IS GOOD THEY DO THIS! ONCE I DISPLAY MY POWER ANEW, THEY WILL BE MINE TO COMMAND!


THOK!
CRAK!
NOW FORWARD, MY WARRIORS!! ATTACK--IN THE NAME OF THE DEMON!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR HASTE! THEY RUN LIKE FRIGHTENED JACKALS! SEE THEM THROW DOWN THEIR ARMS IN SURRENDER!
THUS, MOMENTS LATER, THE MARCH OF CONQUEST CONTINUES--!
EACH DEFEATED FOE JOINS MY OWN TRIUMPHANT ARMY! SOON, NO POWER ON EARTH WILL BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE DEMON--AND HIS GLEAMING STONE!
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE HOSPITAL, A MYSTIFIED THOR HAS CHANGED TO HIS MORTAL IDENTITY OF DR. DON BLAKE...
I MUST LEARN WHAT IS WRONG WITH MY BELOVED--!
JANE! MY DARLING --DO YOU HEAR ME?
HIS VOICE! I HEAR IT AGAIN! BUT--THIS TIME I'M AWAKE! DOES IT MEAN --I'M LOSING MY MIND?
JANE!
I'M GOING MAD!! I KNOW IT!

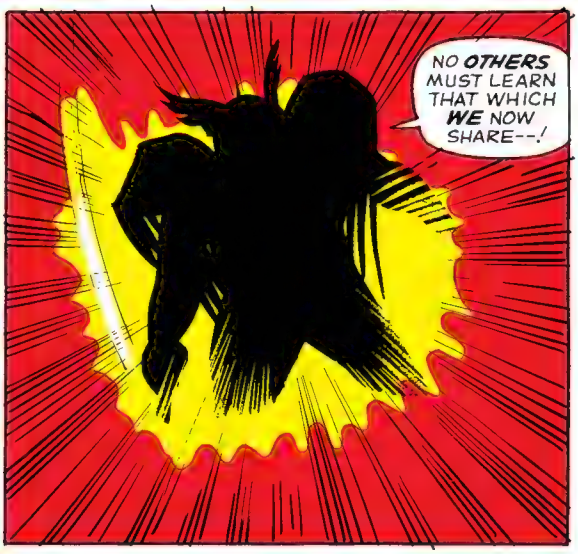

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, MY DEAREST! IT IS ME! I'VE RETURNED TO YOU! I'M BACK!
I-I'M AFRAID TO LOOK! BUT, I MUST-- I MUST--!
IT'S YOU!! THEN--I DIDN'T IMAGINE IT! IT WAS YOUR VOICE I HEARD--!
OF COURSE, DEAR! YOU KNEW I'D RETURN--!
NO! I DIDN'T KNOW! I NEVER KNOW--I'M NEVER SURE! ONE MOMENT YOU'RE BESIDE ME--AND THEN --YOU'VE VANISHED!
I CAN'T BEAR IT ANY MORE! NEVER KNOWING WHERE YOU ARE--WHEN YOU'LL COME BACK AGAIN---OR IF YOU'LL COME BACK!
THEN THIS IS WHAT WAS WRONG! SHE'S SUFFERING A FIT OF DEPRESSION-- AND I'M THE CAUSE OF IT!
YOU'VE TOLD ME YOU LOVE ME--BUT I KNOW YOU'RE KEEPING SOME TERRIBLE SECRET FROM ME--SOME SECRET YOU'VE NEVER ALLOWED ME TO SHARE!
IT'S TRUE, MY DARLING! BUT, IT HAS NEVER AFFECTED MY LOVE FOR YOU--!
HOW CAN I BELIEVE THAT-- WHEN YOU DESERT ME FOR DAYS-- WEEKS AT A TIME--
I NEVER KNOW WHERE YOU ARE-- WHAT YOU'RE DOING! I ONLY KNOW-- YOU'RE GONE!!
I WANT TO SHARE MY SECRET WITH YOU--SO DESPERATELY, MY BELOVED! I WANT TO MARRY YOU--MAKE YOU MINE--
BUT ODIN-- MY FATHER--FORBIDS IT!
GET OUT-- OUT-- DO YOU HEAR ME--??
I CAN'T GO ON THIS WAY! I-I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN! YOU DON'T LOVE ME! YOU'VE NEVER LOVED ME--!
SHE'S ON THE VERGE OF HYSTERIA! SHE'S LOSING HER WILL TO LIVE! I MUST CONVINCE HER-- SOMEHOW--!
DON'T CRY, DEAREST-- YOU'RE TOO WEAK--!
JANE-- LISTEN! YOU MUST BELIEVE ME!

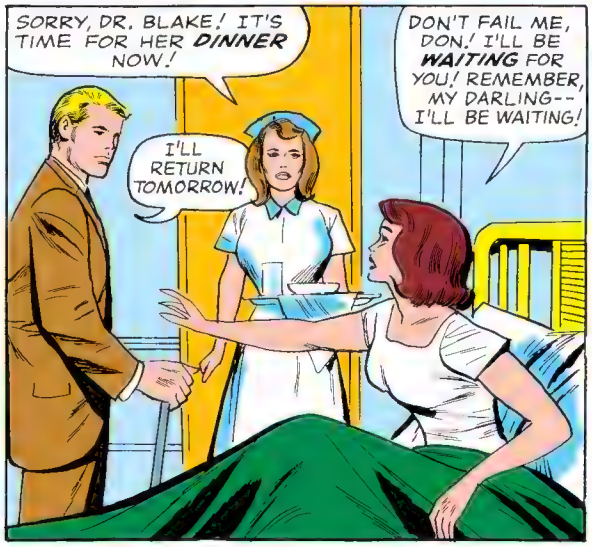
NO! I'LL LISTEN TO NO MORE LIES! NOTHING MATTERS ANY MORE! I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE! I WANT YOU TO GO--TO LEAVE ME--FOREVER--!
HER HEART IS BREAKING!! AND I'M THE CAUSE OF IT! I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE HER LIKE THIS! I CAN'T--!
JANE! MY DARLING! I'LL PROVE MY LOVE--!
LOOK AT ME, JANE FOSTER!
I COMMAND YOU TO LOOK!
THOOM
FORGIVE ME, MY FATHER--
--THIS IS THE ONLY WAY!
KNOW YOU, NOW AND FOREVER, THAT I AM THOR, SON OF ODIN, GOD OF THUNDER!!
'TIS AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD WHOM YOU LOVE, JANE FOSTER--
--AND WHO TRULY LOVES YOU, AS WELL!

THOR!! DON BLAKE!! BOTH--THE SAME MAN! AND YET--IN MY HEART--I SOMEHOW SUSPECTED!
THUS HAS IT EVER BEEN!

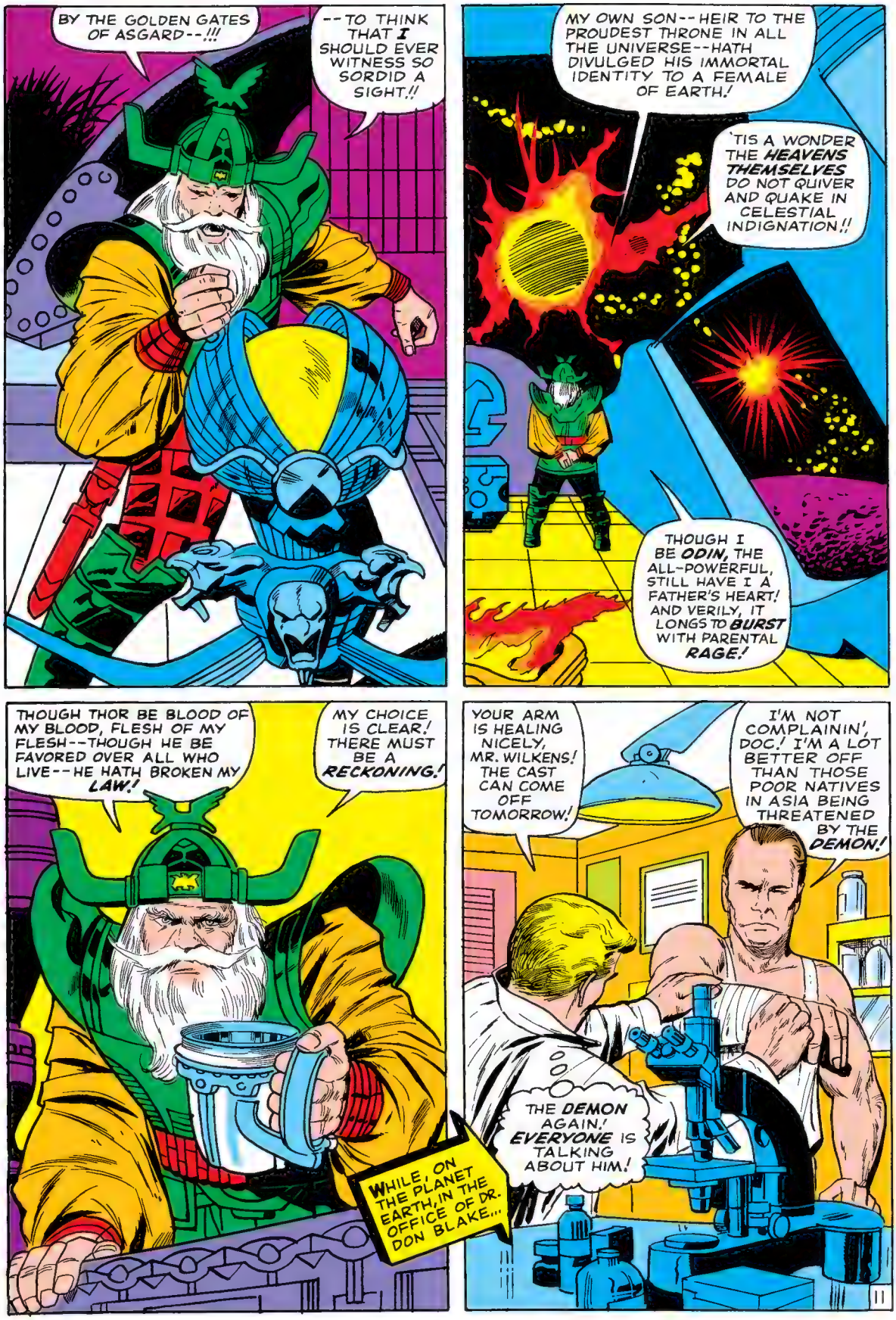
NOW YOU SHARE MY SECRET--AS YOU SHARE MY HEART! THE DEED IS DONE! THERE IS NO TURNING BACK!
YOU MUST PROMISE--PROMISE THAT YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE ME AGAIN!!
FOR, AFTER THIS--HOW COULD I BEAR TO LOSE YOU--??

AS HONOR IS MY MANSION--AS FAITH IS MY SHIELD--I SWEAR TO THEE--
HOLD!! SOMEONE APPROACHES--!


NO OTHERS MUST LEARN THAT WHICH WE NOW SHARE--!


SORRY, DR. BLAKE! IT'S TIME FOR HER DINNER NOW!
I'LL RETURN TOMORROW!
DON'T FAIL ME, DON! I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU! REMEMBER, MY DARLING--I'LL BE WAITING!

BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, IN HALLOWED ASGARD--
MY SON HATH BETRAYED HIS HERITAGE!


BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD--!!!
--TO THINK THAT I SHOULD EVER WITNESS SO SORDID A SIGHT!!
MY OWN SON--HEIR TO THE PROUDEST THRONE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE--HATH DIVULGED HIS IMMORTAL IDENTITY TO A FEMALE OF EARTH!
'TIS A WONDER THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES DO NOT QUIVER AND QUAKE IN CELESTIAL INDIGNATION!!
THOUGH I BE ODIN, THE ALL-POWERFUL, STILL HAVE I A FATHER'S HEART! AND VERILY, IT LONGS TO BURST WITH PARENTAL RAGE!
THOUGH THOR BE BLOOD OF MY BLOOD, FLESH OF MY FLESH--THOUGH HE BE FAVORED OVER ALL WHO LIVE--HE HATH BROKEN MY LAW!
MY CHOICE IS CLEAR! THERE MUST BE A RECKONING!
WHILE, ON THE PLANET EARTH, IN THE OFFICE OF DR. DON BLAKE...
YOUR ARM IS HEALING NICELY, MR. WILKENS! THE CAST CAN COME OFF TOMORROW!
I'M NOT COMPLAININ', DOC! I'M A LOT BETTER OFF THAN THOSE POOR NATIVES IN ASIA BEING THREATENED BY THE DEMON!
THE DEMON AGAIN! EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT HIM!

BEFORE I GO, IT'S JUST TIME FOR THE HOURLY NEWS SUMMARY--!
--NEW REPORTS FROM OVERSEAS INDICATE THAT THE DEMON'S ARMY CAN NOW BE NUMBERED IN THE THOUSANDS, AND IS GROWING WITH EACH NEW CONQUEST!
NOT SINCE THE HORDES OF GENGHIS KHAN SACKED AND PILLAGED THE FAR EAST, HAS ANYONE CAUSED SUCH A MASS EXODUS OF REFUGEES FROM VILLAGES AND TOWNS...
WITH ALL THE TROUBLE IN VIET NAM, AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, NO GOVERNMENT CAN AFFORD TO WORRY ABOUT THE DEMON YET! BUT, IF HE ISN'T STOPPED SOON-- IT MAY BE TOO LATE!
ALONE IN HIS OFFICE ONCE MORE, DON BLAKE SEEMS TO SEE THE SAVAGERY, THE MENACE OF THE DEMON IN HIS MIND'S EYE--!
I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE CRIES OF THE WOUNDED, THE WEAK, AND THE OPPRESSED!
THE DEMON MUST POSSESS SOME FANTASTIC, SUPERNATURAL POWER--SOME SECRET WEAPON WHICH MAKES HIM UNSTOPPABLE!
I CAN'T STILL THE SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE IN MY BRAIN-- THEY GROW LOUDER--LOUDER--
YET, THEY MUST BE STILLED-- FOR EACH DAY, THE DEMON GROWS STRONGER! BUT, WHATEVER HIS POWER-- SURELY THOR CAN CRUSH HIM!
NO! WHAT AM I THINKING?? WHAT AM I SAYING? I PROMISED JANE I'D LEAVE HER NO MORE! AND YET--!
WHERE DOES DUTY REALLY LIE--WHETHER ONE BE MAN-- OR GODLING?
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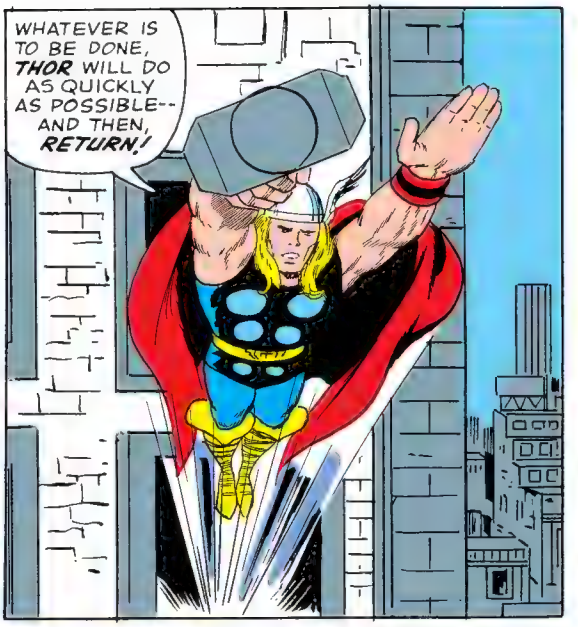
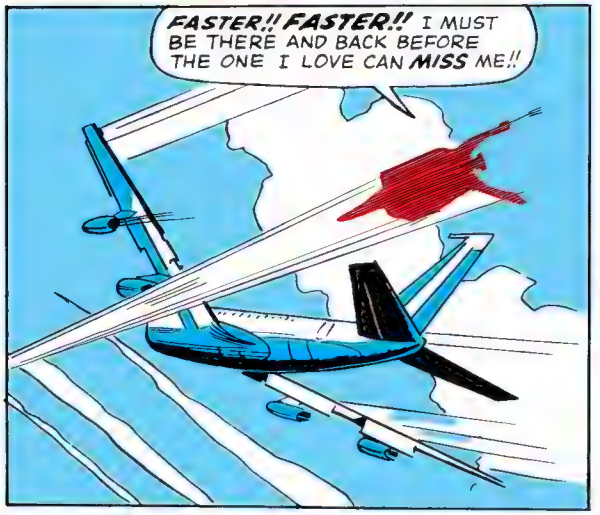
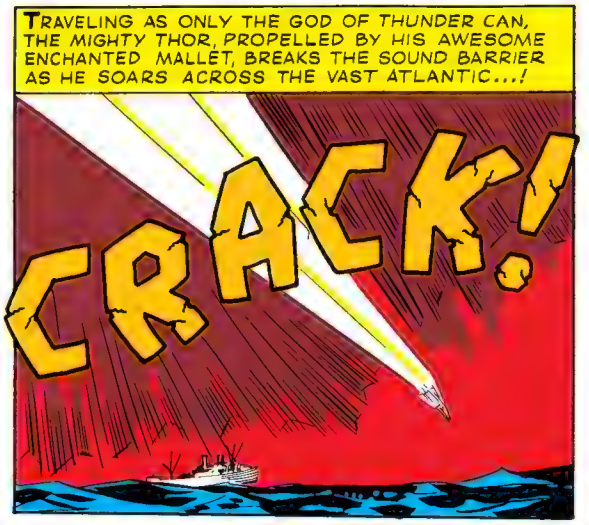
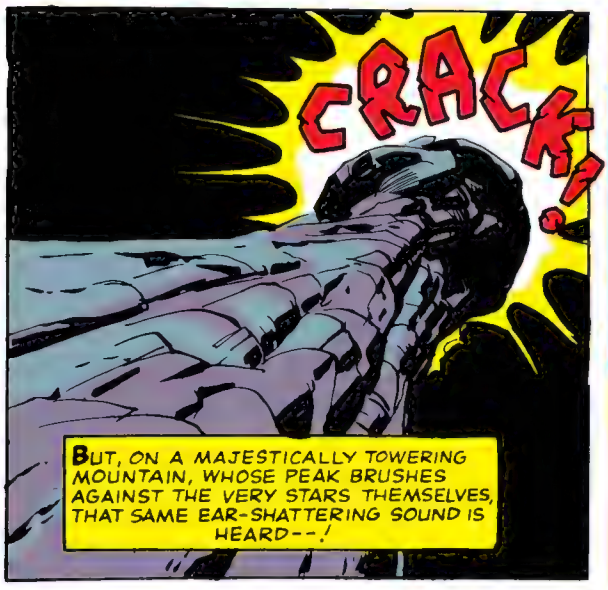
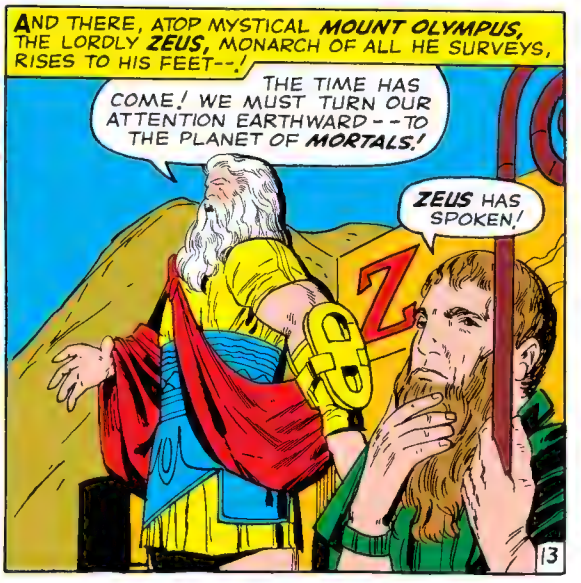
NO!! I CAN'T STAND IDLY BY WHEN I'M NEEDED!! NOT WHEN I HAVE THE MEANS--THE POWER--TO ACT!
FORGIVE ME, JANE! NO MATTER WHAT MY HEART DICTATES--THE CALL OF DUTY SPEAKS LOUDER STILL!

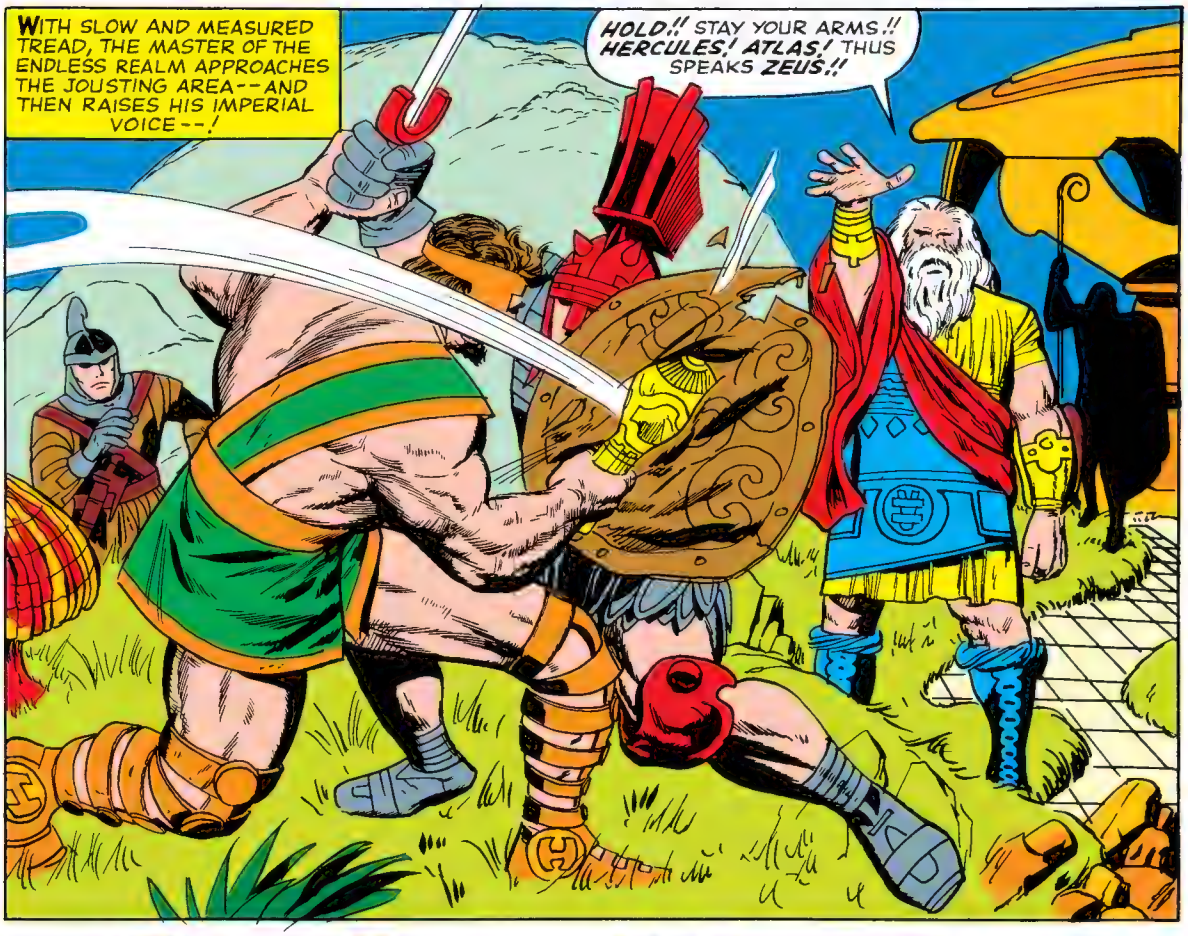

WHATEVER IS TO BE DONE, THOR WILL DO AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE--AND THEN, RETURN!


FASTER!! FASTER!! I MUST BE THERE AND BACK BEFORE THE ONE I LOVE CAN MISS ME!!


TRAVELING AS ONLY THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN, THE MIGHTY THOR, PROPELLED BY HIS AWESOME ENCHANTED MALLET, BREAKS THE SOUND BARRIER AS HE SOARS ACROSS THE VAST ATLANTIC...!
CRACK!

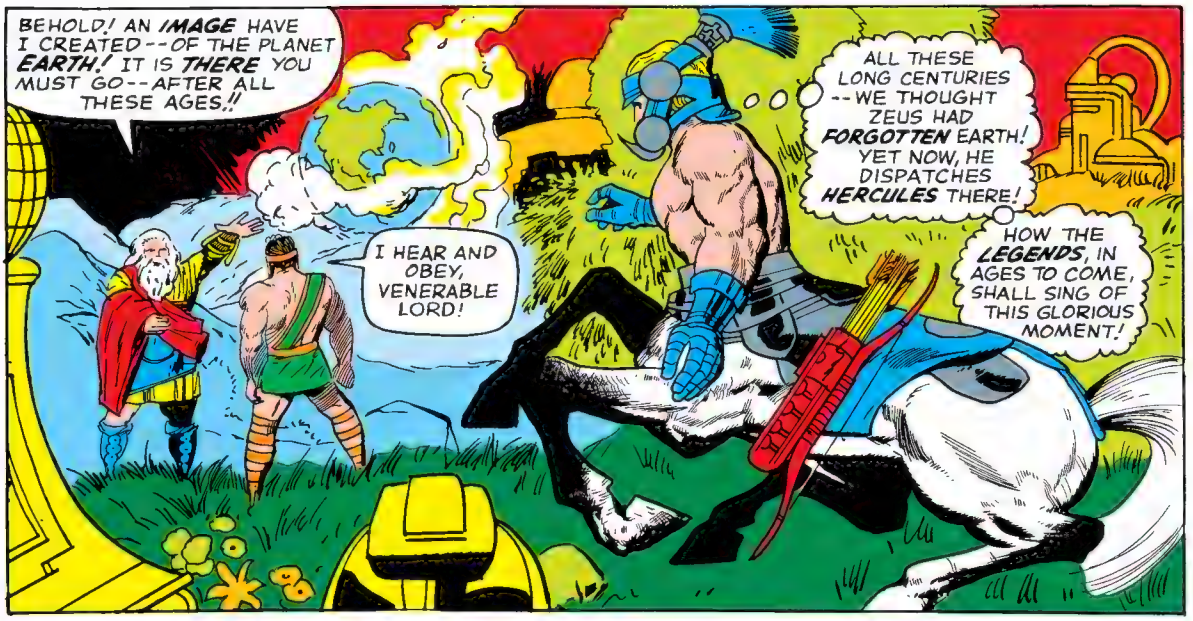

CRACK!
BUT, ON A MAJESTICALLY TOWERING MOUNTAIN, WHOSE PEAK BRUSHES AGAINST THE VERY STARS THEMSELVES, THAT SAME EAR-SHATTERING SOUND IS HEARD--!

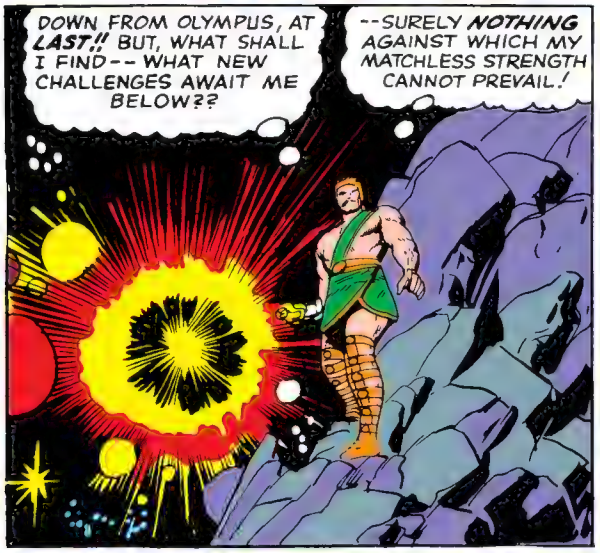

AND THERE, ATOP MYSTICAL MOUNT OLYMPUS, THE LORDLY ZEUS, MONARCH OF ALL HE SURVEYS, RISES TO HIS FEET--!
THE TIME HAS COME! WE MUST TURN OUR ATTENTION EARTHWARD--TO THE PLANET OF MORTALS!
ZEUS HAS SPOKEN!

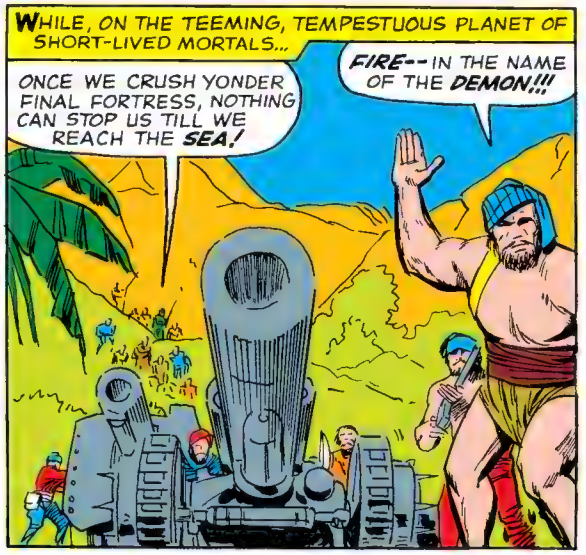

WITH SLOW AND MEASURED TREAD, THE MASTER OF THE ENDLESS REALM APPROACHES THE JOUSTING AREA--AND THEN RAISES HIS IMPERIAL VOICE--!
HOLD!! STAY YOUR ARMS!! HERCULES! ATLAS! THUS SPEAKS ZEUS!!

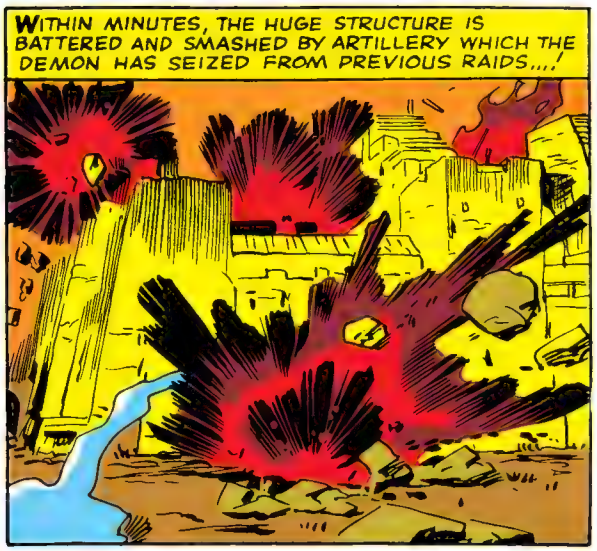
WE HEAR, AND OBEY, SUPREME ONE!
THINE EVERY WORD IS THE ETERNAL LAW!
THEN TO YOUR FEET--THE BOTH OF YOU!

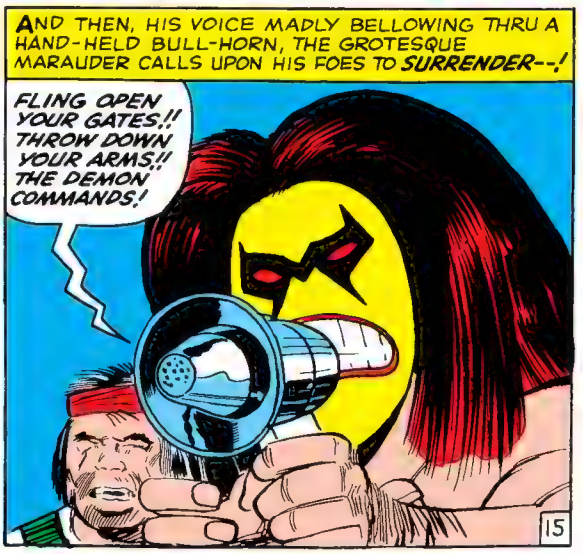
HERCULES, STRONGEST OF ALL MY SONS! STAND THOU ASIDE!
I GROW WEARY OF YOUR NEVER-ENDING RIVALRIES--YOUR CONSTANT BATTLES IN OLYMPUS! THEREFORE, I HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU!
BUT GIVE IT VOICE, FATHER--AND IT SHALL BE DONE!

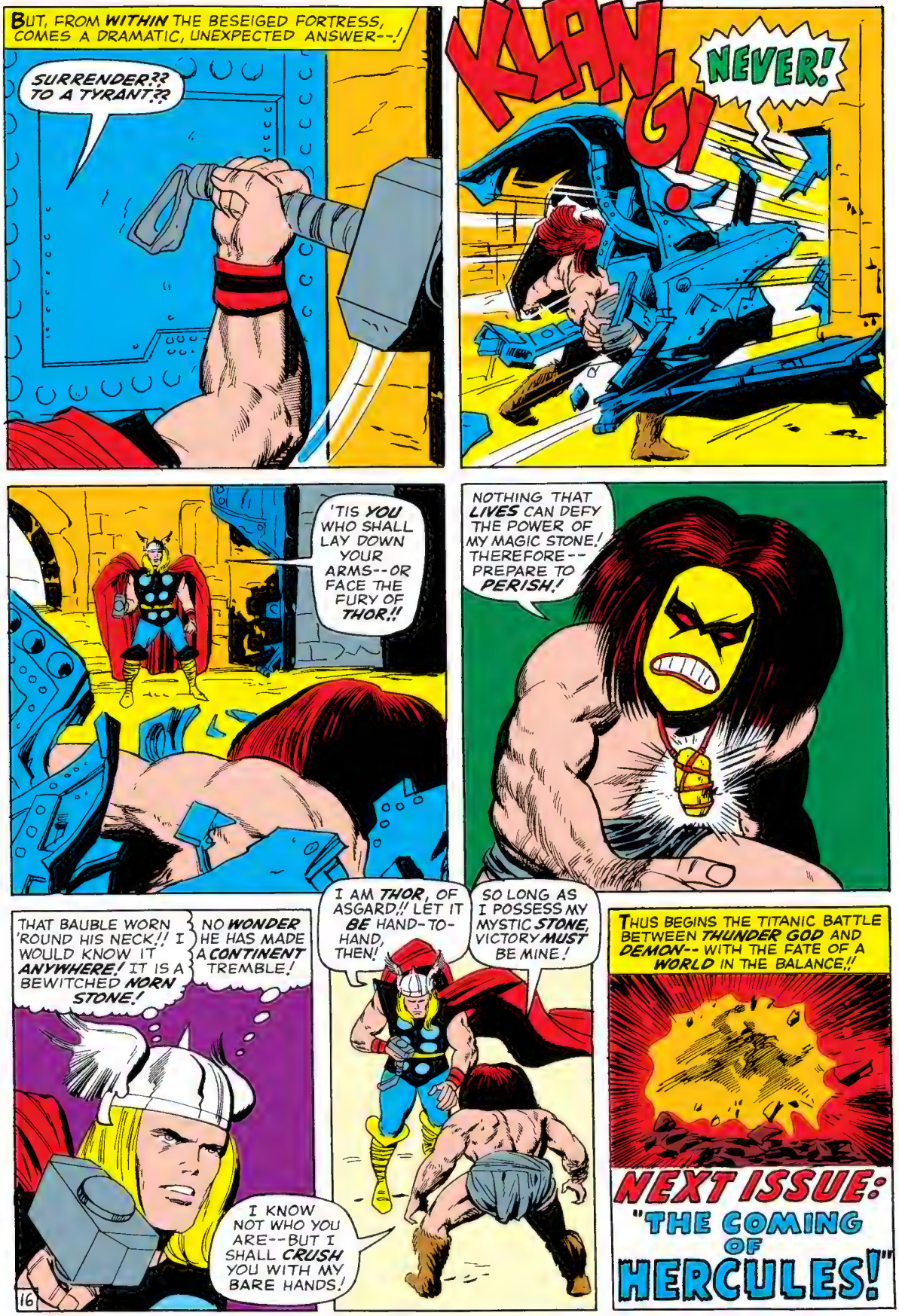

BEHOLD! AN IMAGE HAVE I CREATED--OF THE PLANET EARTH! IT IS THERE YOU MUST GO--AFTER ALL THESE AGES!!
I HEAR AND OBEY, VENERABLE LORD!
ALL THESE LONG CENTURIES --WE THOUGHT ZEUS HAD FORGOTTEN EARTH! YET NOW, HE DISPATCHES HERCULES THERE!
HOW THE LEGENDS, IN AGES TO COME, SHALL SING OF THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT!


DOWN FROM OLYMPUS, AT LAST!! BUT, WHAT SHALL I FIND--WHAT NEW CHALLENGES AWAIT ME BELOW??
--SURELY NOTHING AGAINST WHICH MY MATCHLESS STRENGTH CANNOT PREVAIL!


WHILE, ON THE TEEMING, TEMPESTUOUS PLANET OF SHORT-LIVED MORTALS...
ONCE WE CRUSH YONDER FINAL FORTRESS, NOTHING CAN STOP US TILL WE REACH THE SEA!
FIRE--IN THE NAME OF THE DEMON!!!


WITHIN MINUTES, THE HUGE STRUCTURE IS BATTERED AND SMASHED BY ARTILLERY WHICH THE DEMON HAS SEIZED FROM PREVIOUS RAIDS...!

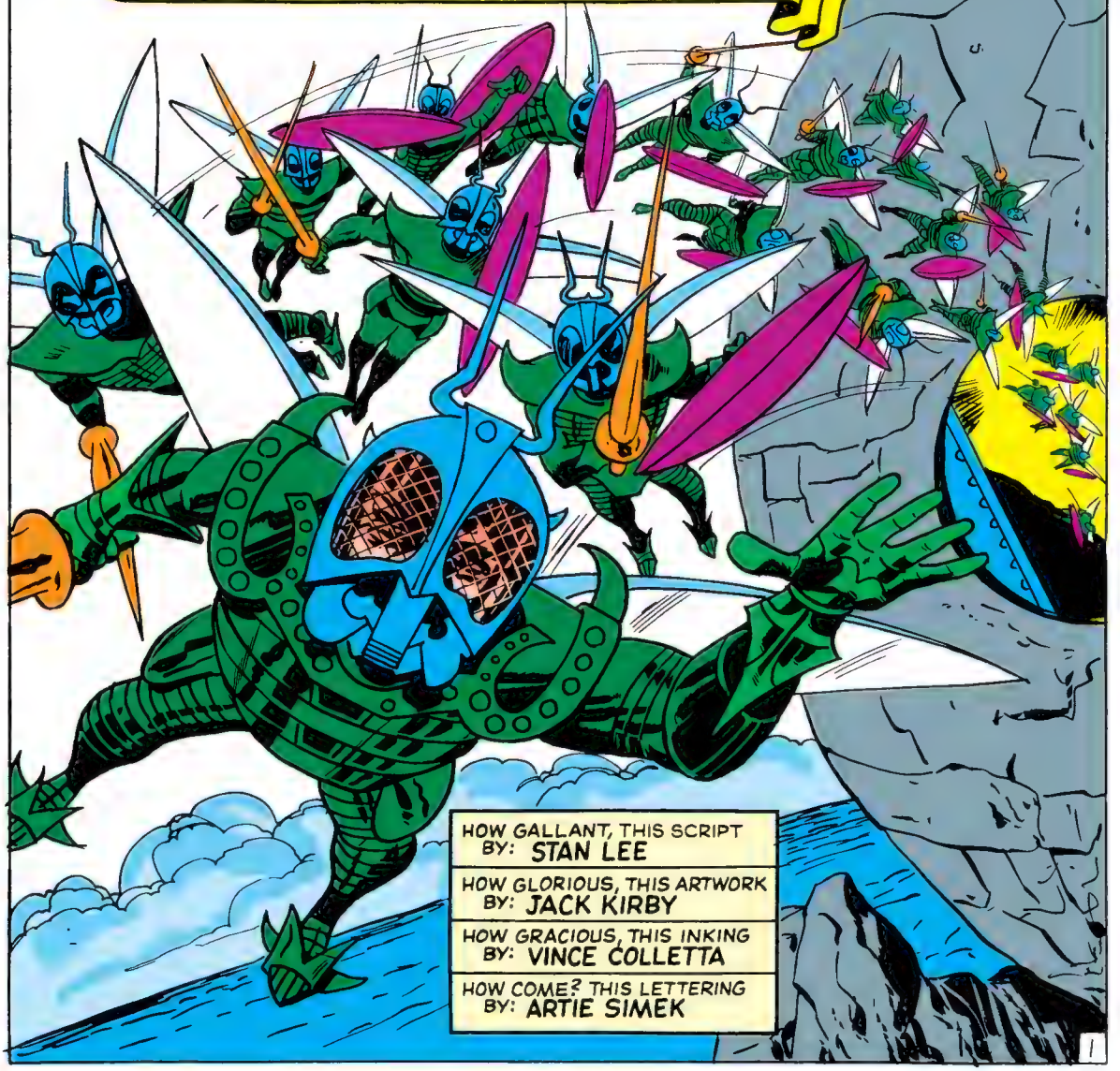

AND THEN, HIS VOICE MADLY BELLOWING THRU A HAND-HELD BULL-HORN, THE GROTESQUE MARAUDER CALLS UPON HIS FOES TO SURRENDER--!
FLING OPEN YOUR GATES!! THROW DOWN YOUR ARMS!! THE DEMON COMMANDS!


BUT, FROM WITHIN THE BESEIGED FORTRESS, COMES A DRAMATIC, UNEXPECTED ANSWER--!
SURRENDER?? TO A TYRANT??
KLAN G!
NEVER!
'TIS YOU WHO SHALL LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS--OR FACE THE FURY OF THOR!!
NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN DEFY THE POWER OF MY MAGIC STONE! THEREFORE--PREPARE TO PERISH!
THAT BAUBLE WORN 'ROUND HIS NECK!! I WOULD KNOW IT ANYWHERE! IT IS A BEWITCHED NORN STONE!
NO WONDER HE HAS MADE A CONTINENT TREMBLE!
I AM THOR, OF ASGARD!! LET IT BE HAND-TO-HAND, THEN!
SO LONG AS I POSSESS MY MYSTIC STONE, VICTORY MUST BE MINE!
I KNOW NOT WHO YOU ARE--BUT I SHALL CRUSH YOU WITH MY BARE HANDS!
THUS BEGINS THE TITANIC BATTLE BETWEEN THUNDER GOD AND DEMON--WITH THE FATE OF A WORLD IN THE BALANCE!!
NEXT ISSUE: "THE COMING OF HERCULES!"
16

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS

"CLOSER COMES THE SWARM!"

FROM THE GIANT *STONE HIVE OF THRYHEIM*, TO THE NOBLE *ODINSHIP OF THOR*, IS A LONG AND DANGEROUS DISTANCE... BUT NOT TO THE *FLYING TROLLS OF QUEEN ULA*, AS SHE SENDS HER LIMITLESS LEGIONS TO *ATTACK* THE LONELY SHIP WHICH HER WINGED SCOUTS HAVE SIGHTED...

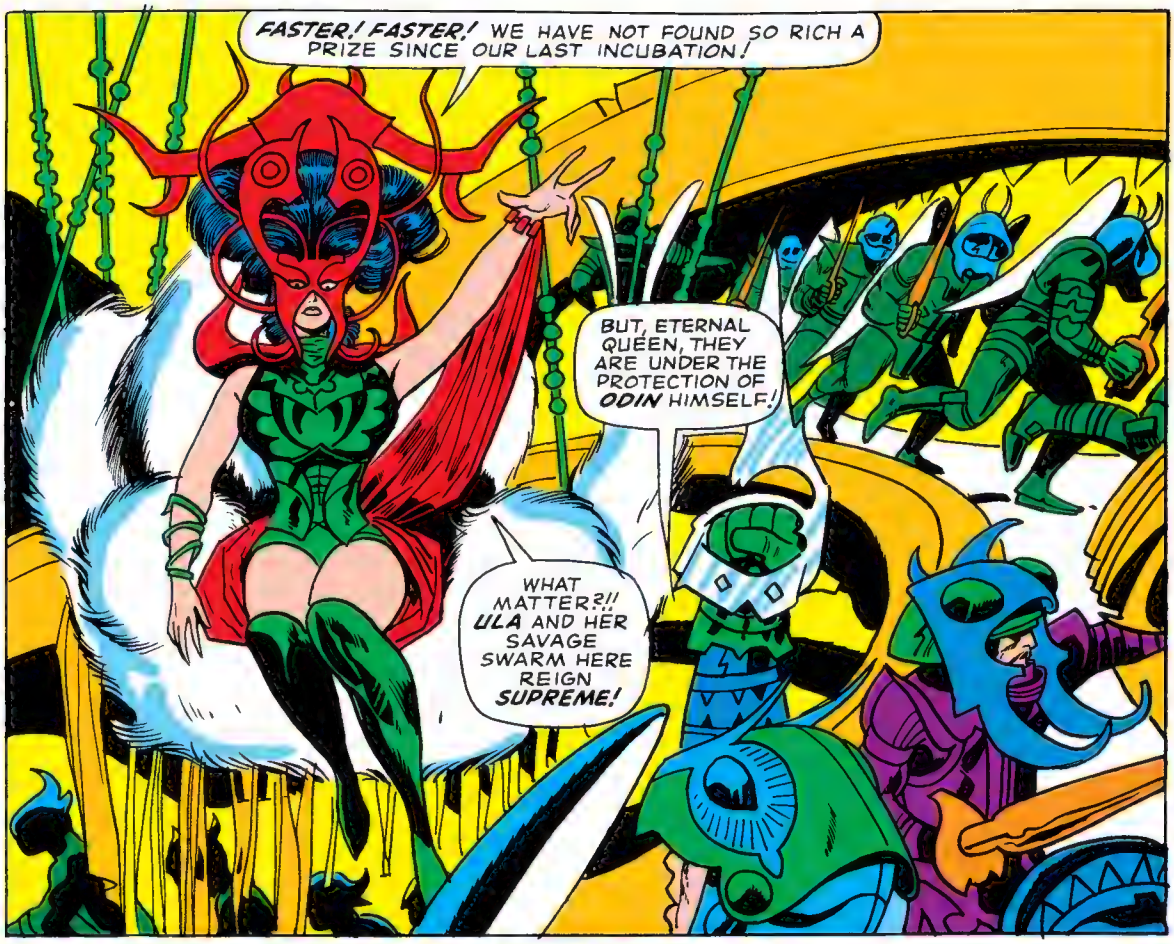


HOW GALLANT, THIS SCRIPT BY: STAN LEE

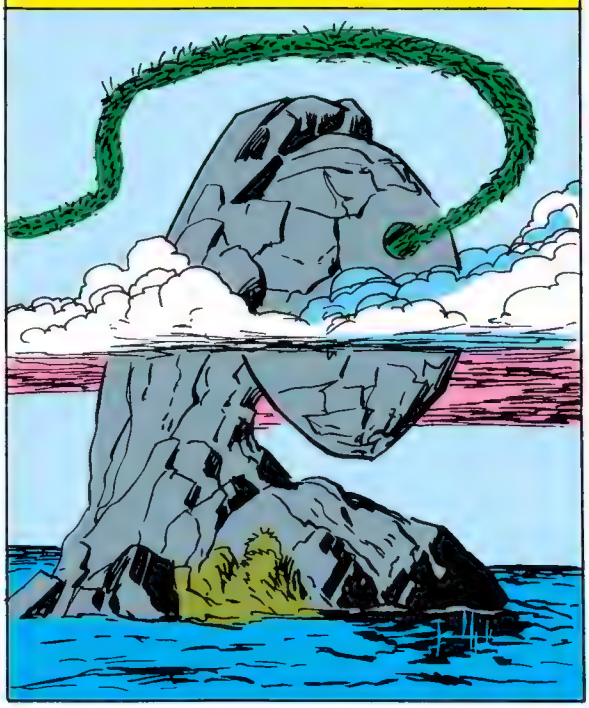
HOW GLORIOUS, THIS ARTWORK BY: JACK KIRBY

HOW GRACIOUS, THIS INKING BY: VINCE COLLETTA

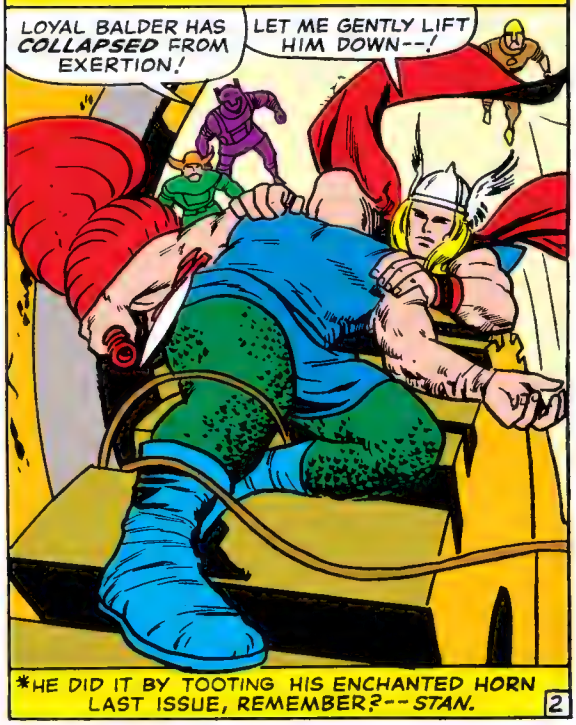
HOW COME? THIS LETTERING BY: ARTIE SIMEK


FASTER! FASTER! WE HAVE NOT FOUND SO RICH A PRIZE SINCE OUR LAST INCUBATION!
BUT, ETERNAL QUEEN, THEY ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF ODIN HIMSELF!
WHAT MATTER?!! ULA AND HER SAVAGE SWARM HERE REIGN SUPREME!

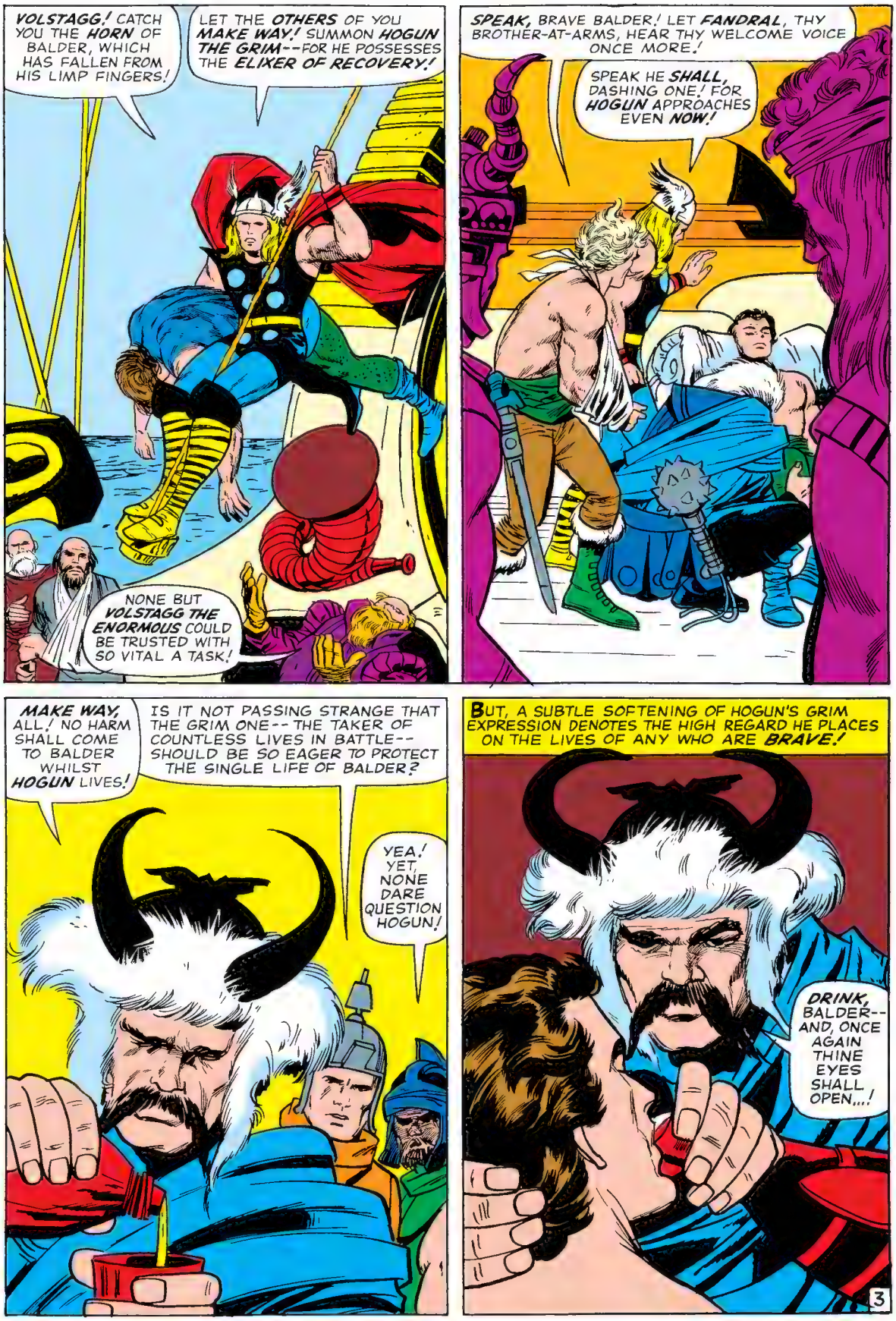
AND SO, THE ENDLESS STREAM OF FANATICAL FLYING TROLLS CONTINUES TO ISSUE FORTH--FROM OUT OF THE GIGANTIC, ALMOST-LEGENDARY STONE NEST OF THRYHEIM....!



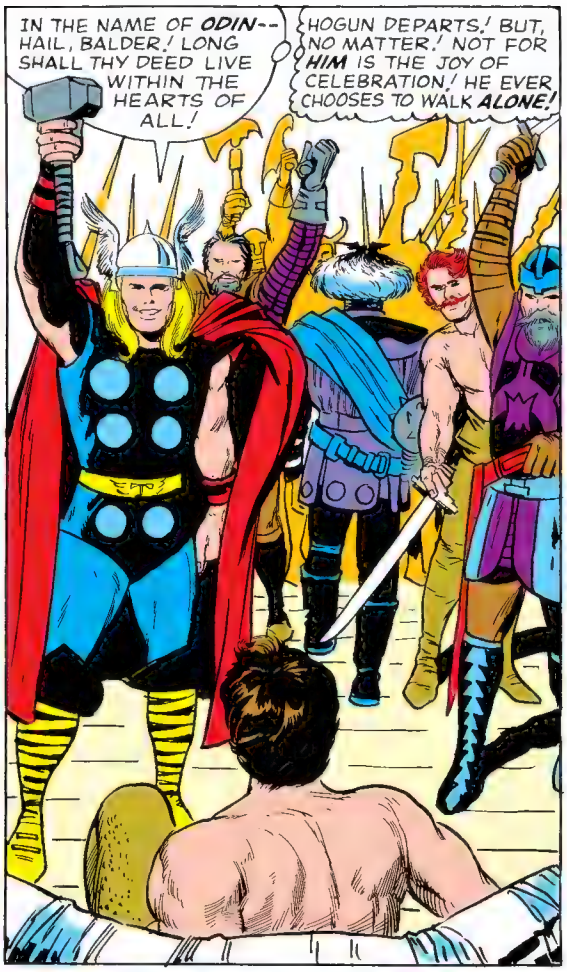
WHILE, ON THE MAJESTIC ODINSHIP, BRAVE BALDER LIES LIMP AND HELPLESS AFTER DEFEATING THE UTGARD DRAGON--*



*HE DID IT BY TOOTING HIS ENCHANTED HORN LAST ISSUE, REMEMBER?--STAN.


VOLSTAGG! CATCH YOU THE HORN OF BALDER, WHICH HAS FALLEN FROM HIS LIMP FINGERS!
LET THE OTHERS OF YOU MAKE WAY! SUMMON HOGUN THE GRIM--FOR HE POSSESSES THE ELIXER OF RECOVERY!
NONE BUT VOLSTAGG THE ENORMOUS COULD BE TRUSTED WITH SO VITAL A TASK!
SPEAK, BRAVE BALDER! LET FANDRAL, THY BROTHER-AT-ARMS, HEAR THY WELCOME VOICE ONCE MORE!
SPEAK HE SHALL, DASHING ONE! FOR HOGUN APPROACHES EVEN NOW!
MAKE WAY, ALL! NO HARM SHALL COME TO BALDER WHILST HOGUN LIVES!
IS IT NOT PASSING STRANGE THAT THE GRIM ONE--THE TAKER OF COUNTLESS LIVES IN BATTLE--SHOULD BE SO EAGER TO PROTECT THE SINGLE LIFE OF BALDER?
YEA! YET, NONE DARE QUESTION HOGUN!
BUT, A SUBTLE SOFTENING OF HOGUN'S GRIM EXPRESSION DENOTES THE HIGH REGARD HE PLACES ON THE LIVES OF ANY WHO ARE BRAVE!
DRINK, BALDER--AND, ONCE AGAIN THINE EYES SHALL OPEN...!
3

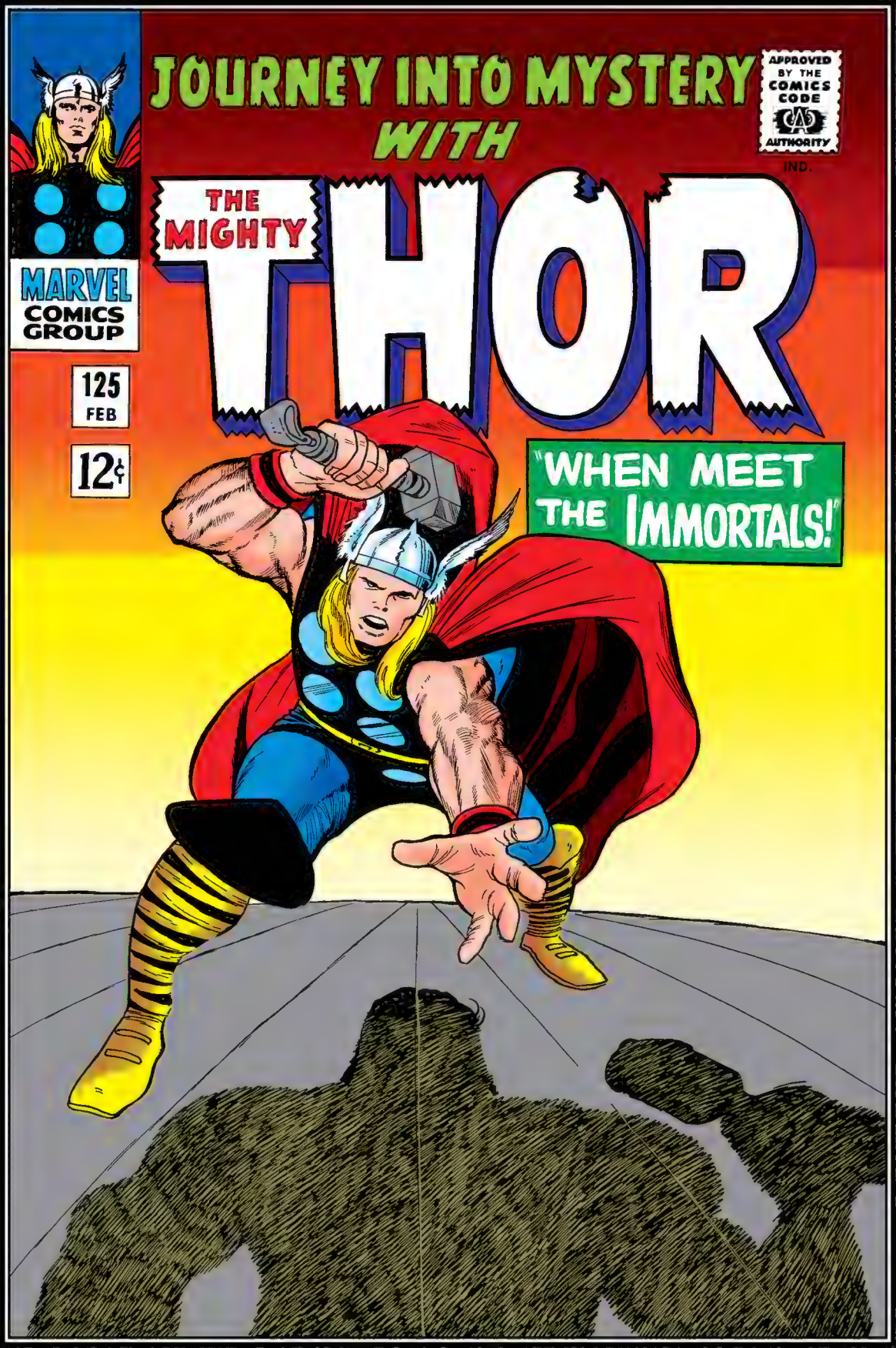
BEHOLD! THE ELIXIR HATH DONE ITS WORK WELL! BALDER RECOVERS!
THE UTGARD DRAGON!! IS-- IS IT--?
IT IS DESTROYED! THANKS TO THY COURAGE, BRAVE ONE!


IN THE NAME OF ODIN-- HAIL, BALDER! LONG SHALL THY DEED LIVE WITHIN THE HEARTS OF ALL!
{HOGUN DEPARTS! BUT, NO MATTER! NOT FOR HIM IS THE JOY OF CELEBRATION! HE EVER CHOOSES TO WALK ALONE!

AND, NOT FOR LOKI AND HIS BLACK-HEARTED COHORTS EITHER IS THE JOY OF CELEBRATION--!
AGAIN THE SHIP IS SAVED! AGAIN THOR HOLDS COMMAND!
DESPAIR NOT, LOKI! I SHALL YET DEVISE A PLAN TO DESTROY HIM! MAGRAT THE SCHEMER SHALL NOT FAIL THEE!
SCHEMES, BAH! THE BLADE OF KRODA IS FAR MORE SURE!
I SHALL GO FORTH AND SPY ON THOR! MAYHAP IT WILL PROVE FRUITFUL!

OUR JOURNEY IS STILL NOT ENDED! MUCH CAN HAPPEN BEFORE WE REACH OUR GOAL! AM I FULLY UNDERSTOOD?
FULLY INDEED, MASTER OF EVIL! IT IS OUR TASK TO SEE THAT THE THUNDER GOD COMPLETES NOT THE VOYAGE!

MEANWHILE, LED BY THE GARGANTUAN, IRREPRESSIBLE VOLSTAGG, THE CHEERING FOR THE IMMORTAL WHO HAS SAVED THE ODINSHIP CONTINUES, UNTIL--
SILENCE!! I AM ABOUT TO PERFORM A MOST PRODIGIOUS FEAT...!
IN HONOR OF OUR DELIVERANCE, IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT THE MIGHTY LUNGS OF VOLSTAGG BLOW THE ENCHANTED HORN ONCE MORE--!
THIS I DO BECAUSE MY GREAT HEART IS FULL OF LOVE FOR BALDER--WHO IS STILL WEAK!
ODD!! THOUGH I BLOW WITH MY USUAL EXTRAORDINARY FORCE AND POWER, ALL I HEAR IS A DULL HUM--
CAN THIS BE PART OF THE HORN'S ENCHANTMENT?? THE SOUND SEEMS TO COME FROM BEHIND MY HEROIC FIGURE--GROWING EVER LOUDER!
MIGHTY THOR!! OBSERVE! OVER THE HORIZON--!
WEAPONS IN HAND!! FOR ODIN! FOR ASGARD!
STOP!! SHEATH THY WEAPONS!! SURELY, I DID NOT PLAY THE HORN SO BADLY!!
'TIS NOT YOUR PLAYING WE TAKE ARMS AGAINST, O MOUNTAINOUS ONE!!
TURN, VOLSTAGG!! TURN AND BEHOLD--THE FLYING TROLLS OF THRYHEIM!!
5
NO MATTER WHAT THE PROVOCATION, YOU SHALL NOT MISS THE NEXT ISSUE! WE HAVE SPOKEN!


JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY
WITH
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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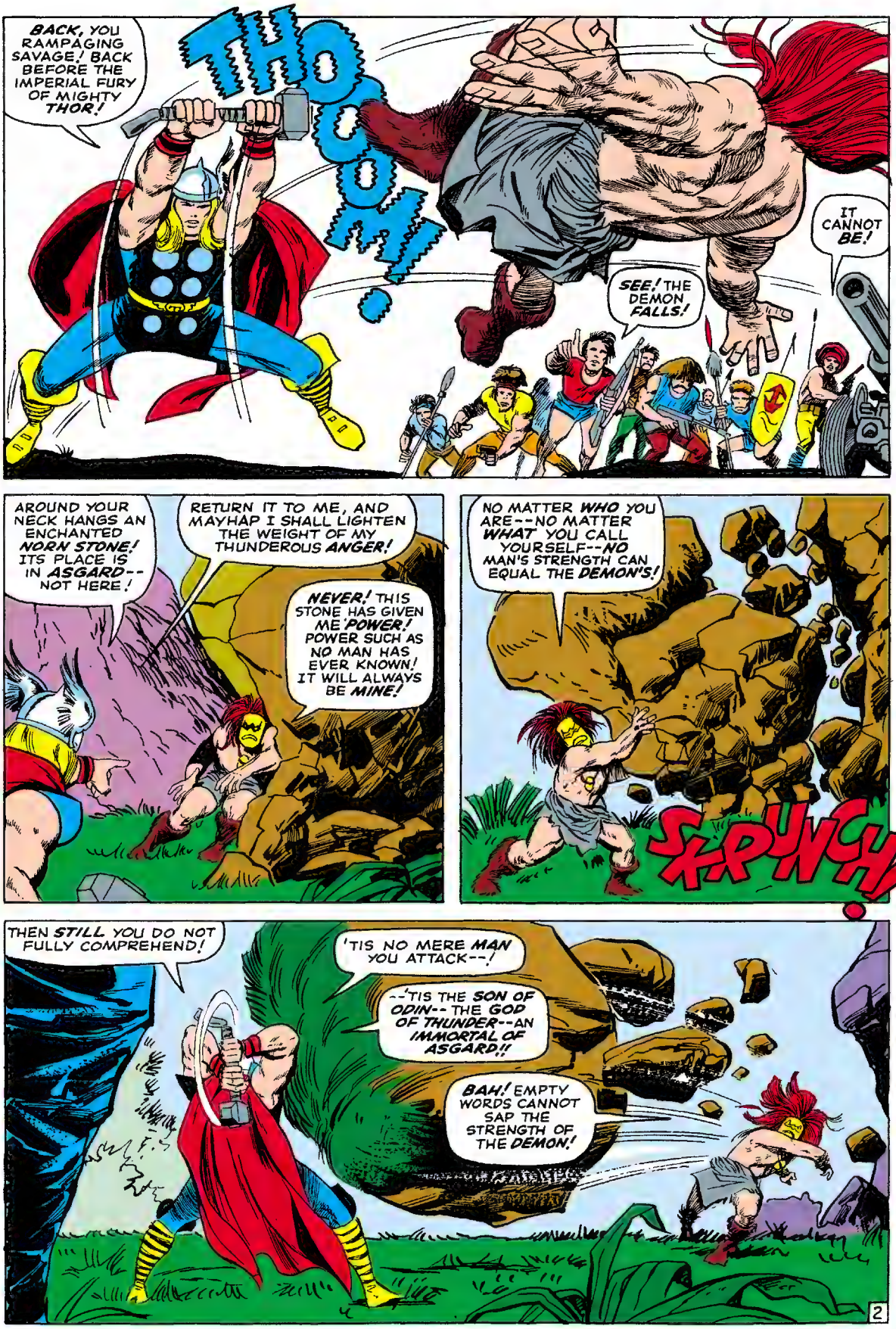
"WHEN MEET THE IMMORTALS!"

THE MIGHTY THOR!

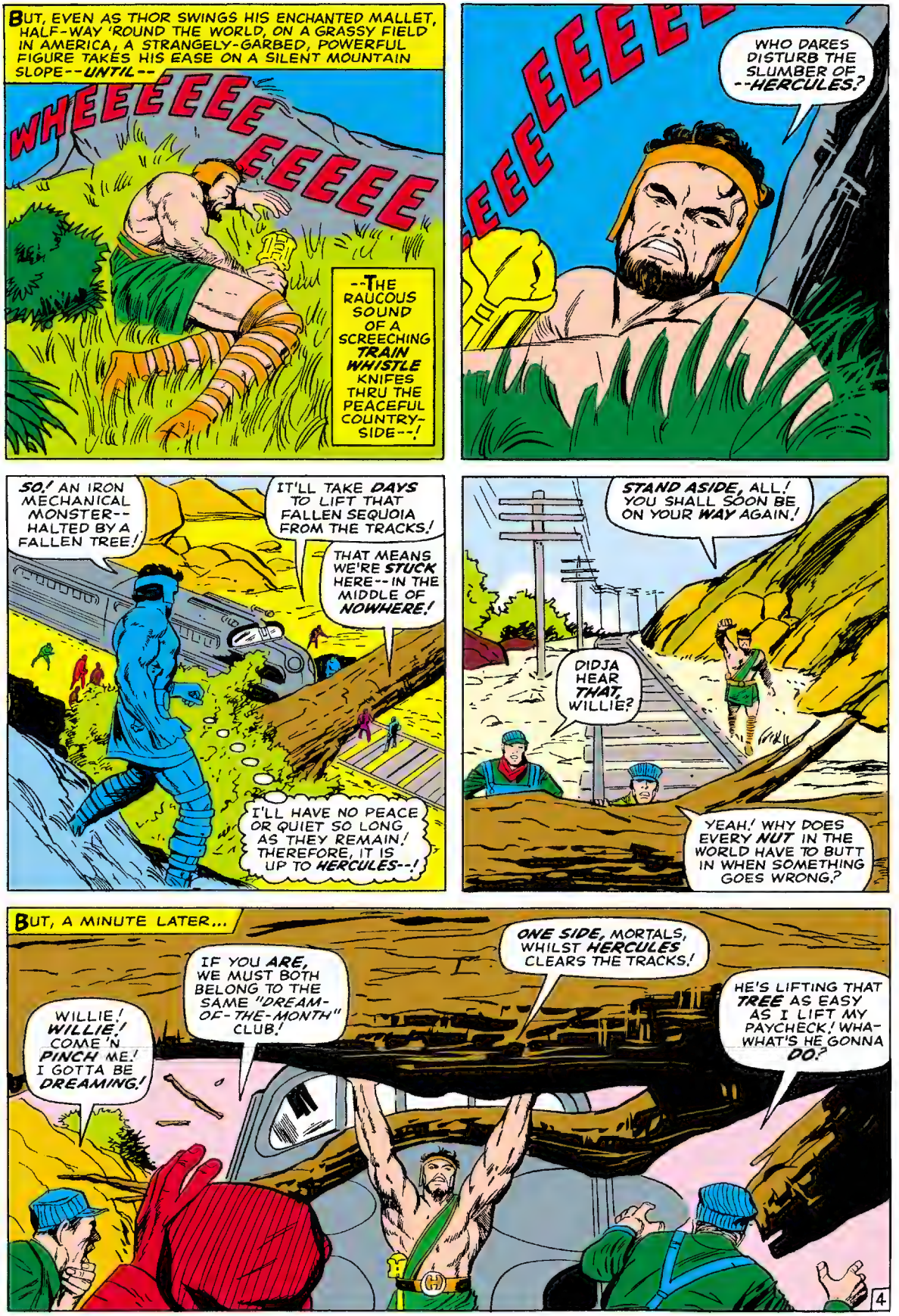
"WHEN MEET THE IMMORTALS!"

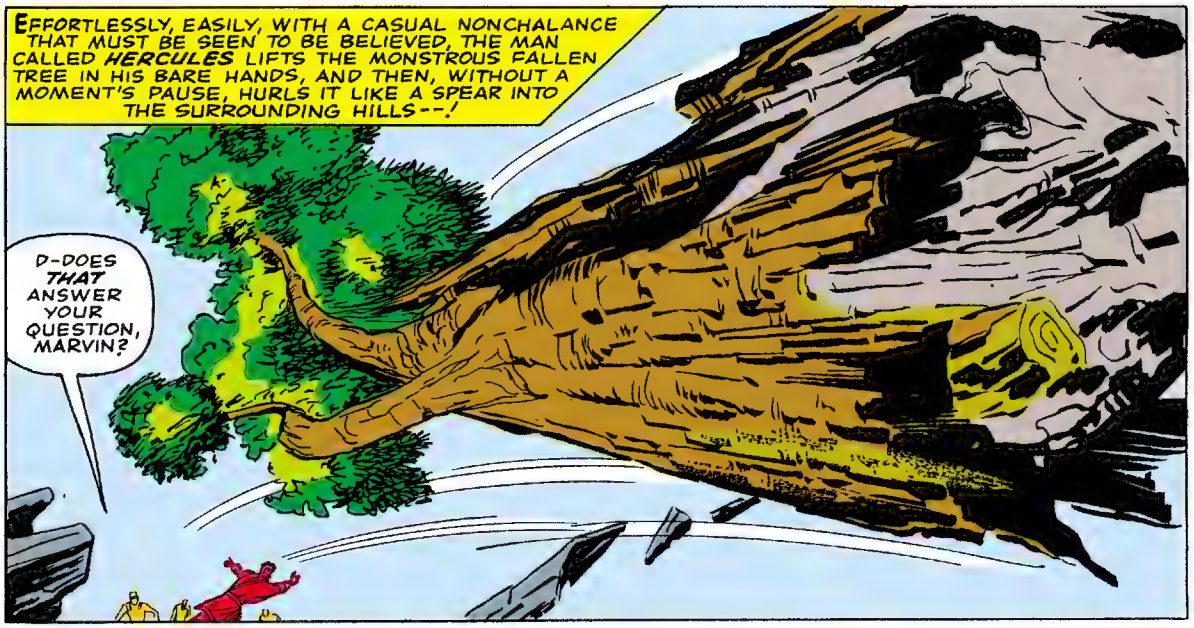
FEATURING: THE COMING OF HERCULES!
DID YOU EVER SAMPLE AN INSTANT SYNOPSIS? TRY THIS--!
A WITCH DOCTOR FOUND ONE OF THOR'S LOST NORN STONES!
ITS POWER CHANGED HIM INTO THE DREADED DEMON! (THE WITCH DOCTOR, NOT THOR!)
THOR HAS TO DEFEAT HIM AND REGAIN THE ENCHANTED STONE!
THERE! HOWZAT?

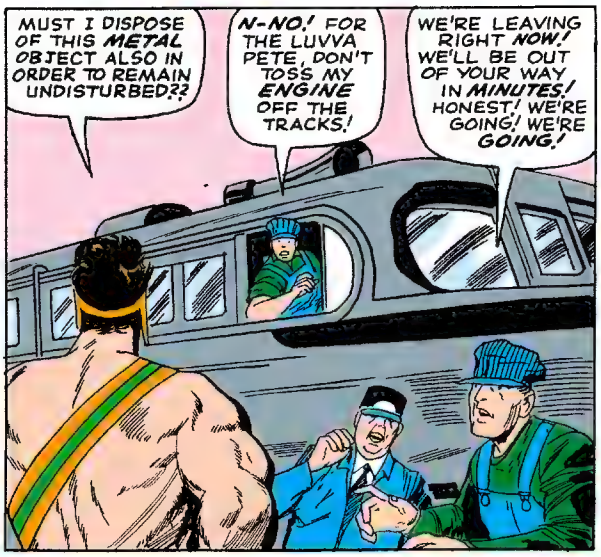
BOMBASTICALLY WRITTEN BY STAN LEE | BRILLIANTLY DRAWN BY JACK KIRBY | BEAUTIFULLY INKED BY VINCE COLLETTA | BASHFULLY LETTERED BY ARTIE SIMEK

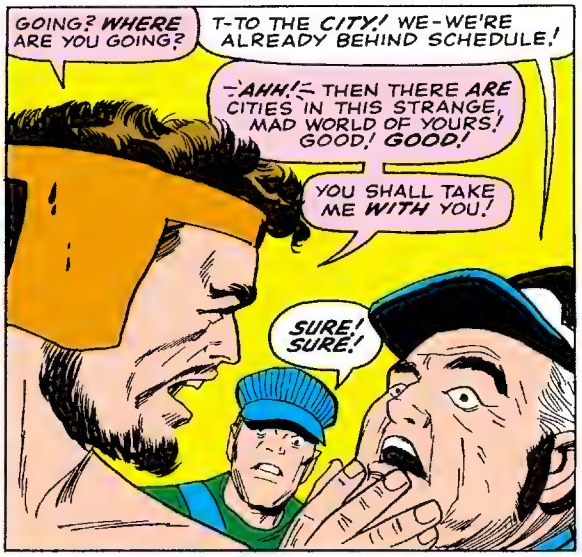

BACK, YOU RAMPAGING SAVAGE! BACK BEFORE THE IMPERIAL FURY OF MIGHTY THOR!
THOOM!
IT CANNOT BE!
SEE! THE DEMON FALLS!
AROUND YOUR NECK HANGS AN ENCHANTED NORN STONE! ITS PLACE IS IN ASGARD-- NOT HERE!
RETURN IT TO ME, AND MAYHAP I SHALL LIGHTEN THE WEIGHT OF MY THUNDEROUS ANGER!
NEVER! THIS STONE HAS GIVEN ME POWER! POWER SUCH AS NO MAN HAS EVER KNOWN! IT WILL ALWAYS BE MINE!
NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE--NO MATTER WHAT YOU CALL YOURSELF--NO MAN'S STRENGTH CAN EQUAL THE DEMON'S!
SKRUNCH!
THEN STILL YOU DO NOT FULLY COMPREHEND!
'TIS NO MERE MAN YOU ATTACK--!
--'TIS THE SON OF ODIN-- THE GOD OF THUNDER--AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD!!
BAH! EMPTY WORDS CANNOT SAP THE STRENGTH OF THE DEMON!

INDEED--EMPTY WORDS CAN ACCOMPLISH NAUGHT!
BUT, A WORLD CAN BE TORN ASUNDER BY THE HAMMER, AND THE ARM OF THOR!
KRROOM!
UNNERVED--DESPERATE--THE DEMON RESORTS TO ONE OF THE GIANT CANNONS HIS LEGIONS HAVE PLUNDERED ON THEIR MARCH TO THE SEA--!
THE GREAT SPIRIT HAS SENT HIM TO TEST OUR METTLE! WE MUST NOT FAIL NOW!
QUICK! OUR LARGEST WEAPON! DESTROY HIM WHERE HE STANDS! NOW! NOW!
THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS THAT THEY HAVE CAPTURED! THAT IS NO ORDINARY ARTILLERY PIECE! IT IS EQUIPPED WITH ROCKET SHELLS!
BUT, I SHALL FIND A WAY TO RENDER IT USELESS --SOMEHOW!
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN--LET THERE BE AN END TO THIS MOCKERY HERE AND NOW!
SO SPEAKS THE SON OF ODIN!

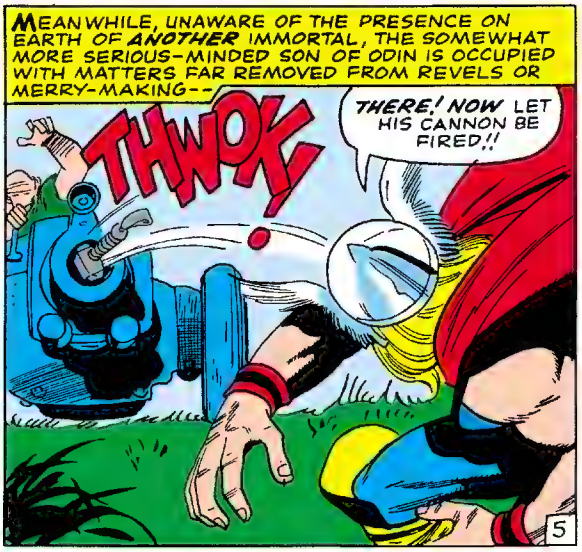

BUT, EVEN AS THOR SWINGS HIS ENCHANTED MALLET, HALF-WAY 'ROUND THE WORLD, ON A GRASSY FIELD IN AMERICA, A STRANGELY-GARBED, POWERFUL FIGURE TAKES HIS EASE ON A SILENT MOUNTAIN SLOPE--UNTIL--
WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
--THE RAUCOUS SOUND OF A SCREECHING TRAIN WHISTLE KNIFES THRU THE PEACEFUL COUNTRY-SIDE--!
EEEEEEEEEE
WHO DARES DISTURB THE SLUMBER OF --HERCULES?
SO! AN IRON MECHANICAL MONSTER--HALTED BY A FALLEN TREE!
IT'LL TAKE DAYS TO LIFT THAT FALLEN SEQUOIA FROM THE TRACKS!
THAT MEANS WE'RE STUCK HERE--IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE!
I'LL HAVE NO PEACE OR QUIET SO LONG AS THEY REMAIN! THEREFORE, IT IS UP TO HERCULES--!
STAND ASIDE, ALL! YOU SHALL SOON BE ON YOUR WAY AGAIN!
DIDJA HEAR THAT, WILLIE?
YEAH! WHY DOES EVERY NUT IN THE WORLD HAVE TO BUTT IN WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG?
BUT, A MINUTE LATER...
WILLIE! WILLIE! COME 'N PINCH ME! I GOTTA BE DREAMING!
IF YOU ARE, WE MUST BOTH BELONG TO THE SAME "DREAM-OF-THE-MONTH" CLUB!
ONE SIDE, MORTALS, WHILST HERCULES CLEARS THE TRACKS!
HE'S LIFTING THAT TREE AS EASY AS I LIFT MY PAYCHECK! WHA-WHAT'S HE GONNA DO?
4


EFFORTLESSLY, EASILY, WITH A CASUAL NONCHALANCE THAT MUST BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED, THE MAN CALLED HERCULES LIFTS THE MONSTROUS FALLEN TREE IN HIS BARE HANDS, AND THEN, WITHOUT A MOMENT'S PAUSE, HURLS IT LIKE A SPEAR INTO THE SURROUNDING HILLS--!
D-DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, MARVIN?

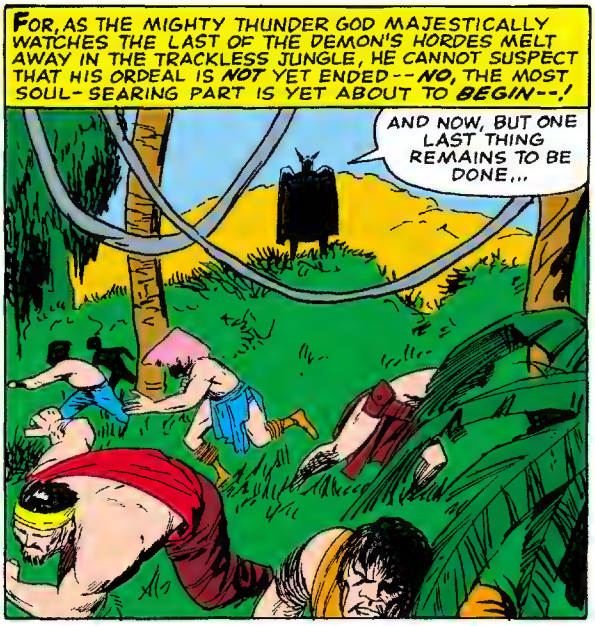

MUST I DISPOSE OF THIS METAL OBJECT ALSO IN ORDER TO REMAIN UNDISTURBED??
N-NO! FOR THE LUVVA PETE, DON'T TOSS MY ENGINE OFF THE TRACKS!
WE'RE LEAVING RIGHT NOW! WE'LL BE OUT OF YOUR WAY IN MINUTES! HONEST! WE'RE GOING! WE'RE GOING!


GOING? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
T-TO THE CITY! WE-WE'RE ALREADY BEHIND SCHEDULE!
-AHH!- THEN THERE ARE CITIES IN THIS STRANGE, MAD WORLD OF YOURS! GOOD! GOOD!
YOU SHALL TAKE ME WITH YOU!
SURE! SURE!

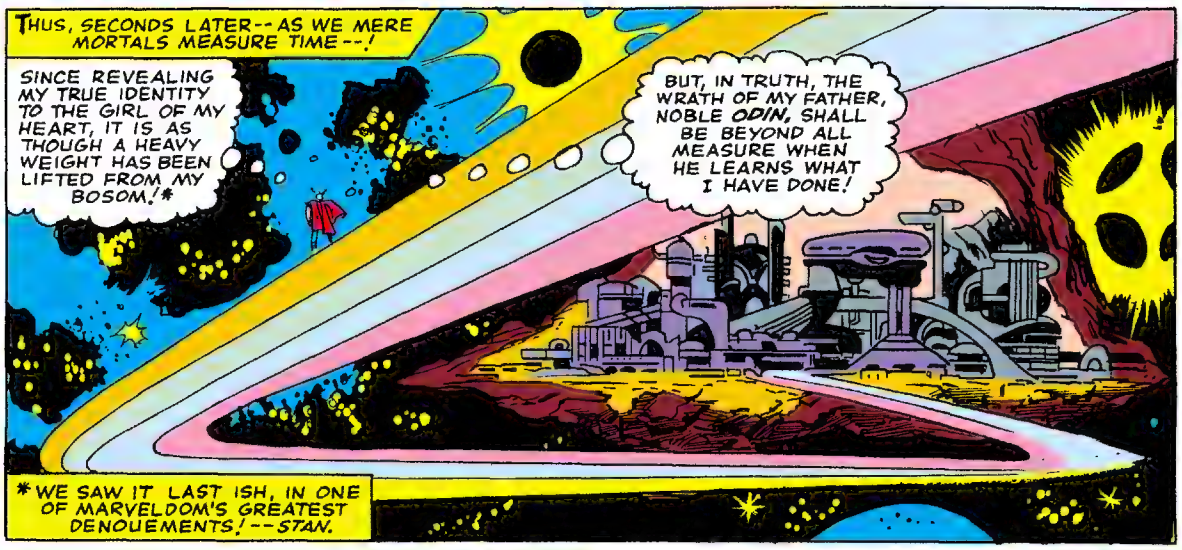
HERCULES HAS ALWAYS LOVED CITIES! IT IS THERE WHERE THE CROWDS ARE-- WHERE REVELING AND MERRY-MAKING ARE EVER TO BE FOUND!
AND WHO CAN ENJOY THE GOOD LIFE AS MUCH AS AN OLYMPIAN GOD?!!
TAKE ME THEN TO YOUR CITY! HERCULES COMMANDS!

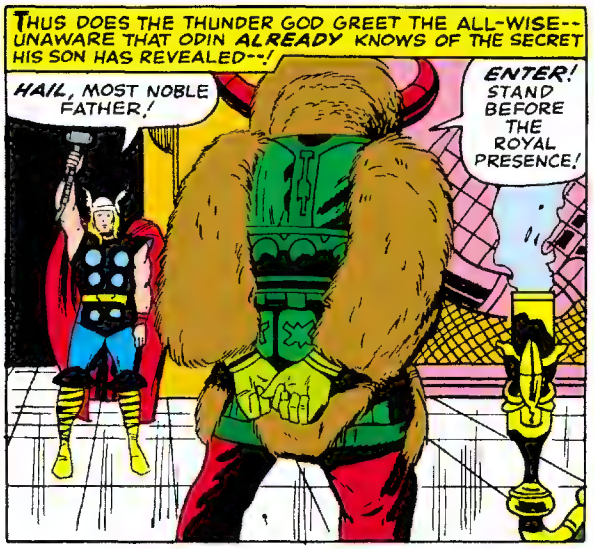

MEANWHILE, UNAWARE OF THE PRESENCE ON EARTH OF ANOTHER IMMORTAL, THE SOMEWHAT MORE SERIOUS-MINDED SON OF ODIN IS OCCUPIED WITH MATTERS FAR REMOVED FROM REVELS OR MERRY-MAKING--
THWOK!
THERE! NOW LET HIS CANNON BE FIRED!!

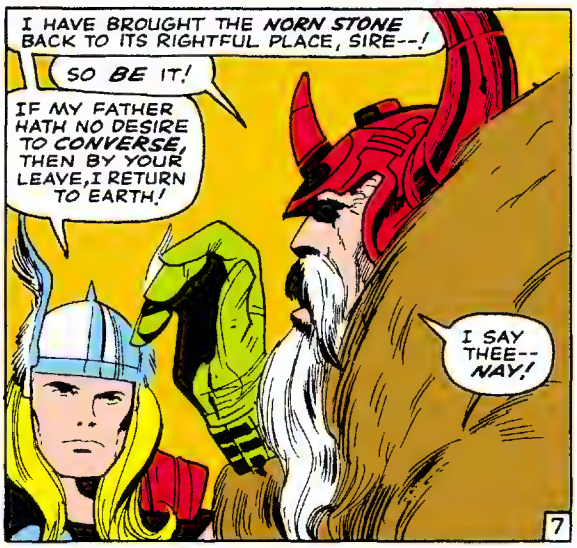
AND, AS IF IN ANSWER TO THOR'S GRIM CHALLENGE--!
KHOOM!
THE DEMON'S MINIONS FLEE IN PANIC! THUS, WITH ONE STROKE, I HAVE SCATTERED HIS ARMY!
AND NOW, LET MY ENCHANTED MALLET RETURN!
THWIPP!
SO BE IT!
THERE HE LIES-- ALONE-- COMPLETELY VANQUISHED --!
A MUTE TESTAMENT TO THE FOLLY OF POSSESSING GREAT POWER WITHOUT THE WISDOM TO USE IT JUSTLY!
HE IS MERELY STUNNED! THE NORN STONE PROTECTED HIM FROM ANY GREATER HARM--AS I KNEW IT WOULD!
BUT IT SHALL PROTECT HIM-- IT SHALL SERVE HIM-- NO MORE!
MY MISSION HERE IS ENDED! THE DANGER IS PAST!
BUT ALAS, THOR DOES NOT SUSPECT THE FAR GREATER DANGER WHICH HE SOON MUST FACE--!


FOR, AS THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD MAJESTICALLY WATCHES THE LAST OF THE DEMON'S HORDES MELT AWAY IN THE TRACKLESS JUNGLE, HE CANNOT SUSPECT THAT HIS ORDEAL IS NOT YET ENDED--NO, THE MOST SOUL-SEARING PART IS YET ABOUT TO BEGIN--!
AND NOW, BUT ONE LAST THING REMAINS TO BE DONE...

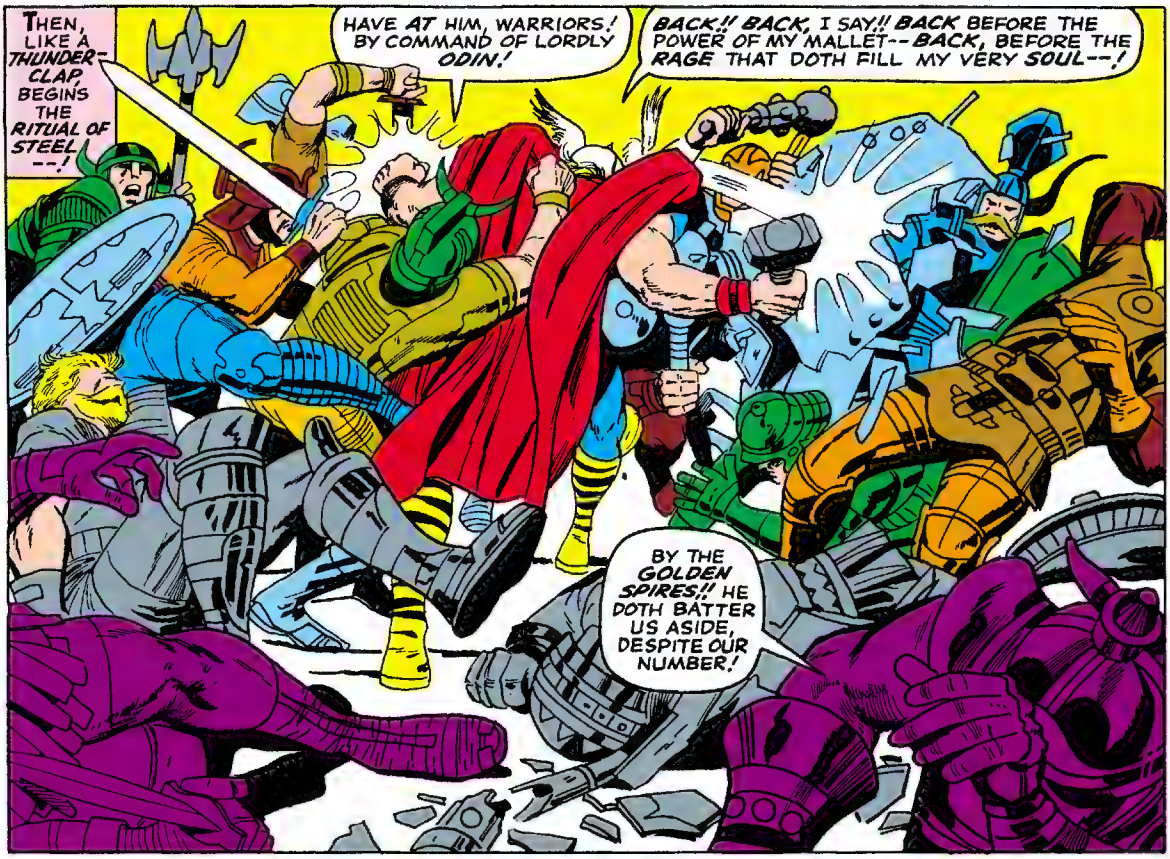
BEFORE RETURNING TO MY BELOVED JANE, I MUST BRING THE ENCHANTED STONE BACK SAFELY TO THE GOLDEN REALM...
IT SHALL BE THE WORK OF MERE MINUTES--AND THEN, NOTHING SHALL PART ME FROM MY LOVED ONE AGAIN!
ON THEN--TO BIFROST--THE ETERNAL RAINBOW BRIDGE!!

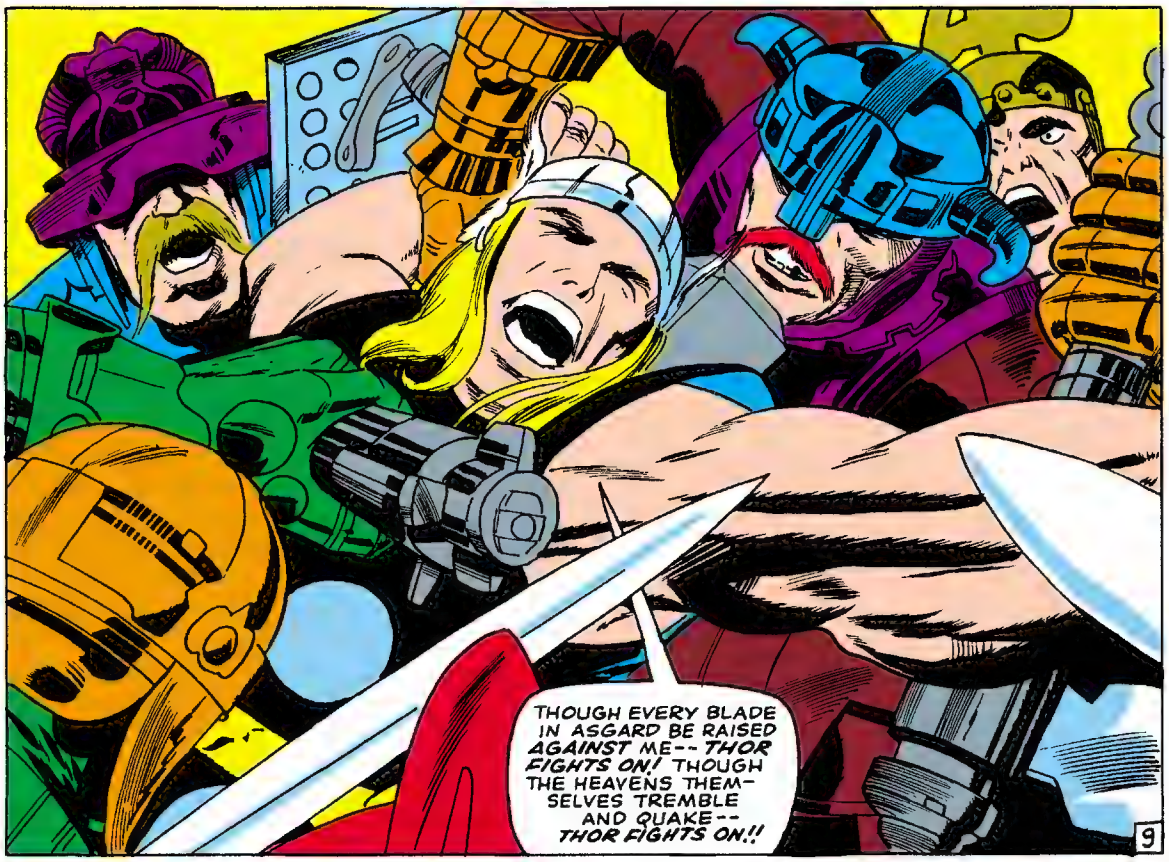

THUS, SECONDS LATER--AS WE MERE MORTALS MEASURE TIME--!
SINCE REVEALING MY TRUE IDENTITY TO THE GIRL OF MY HEART, IT IS AS THOUGH A HEAVY WEIGHT HAS BEEN LIFTED FROM MY BOSOM.!*
BUT, IN TRUTH, THE WRATH OF MY FATHER, NOBLE ODIN, SHALL BE BEYOND ALL MEASURE WHEN HE LEARNS WHAT I HAVE DONE!
*WE SAW IT LAST ISH, IN ONE OF MARVELDOM'S GREATEST DENOUEMENTS!--STAN.

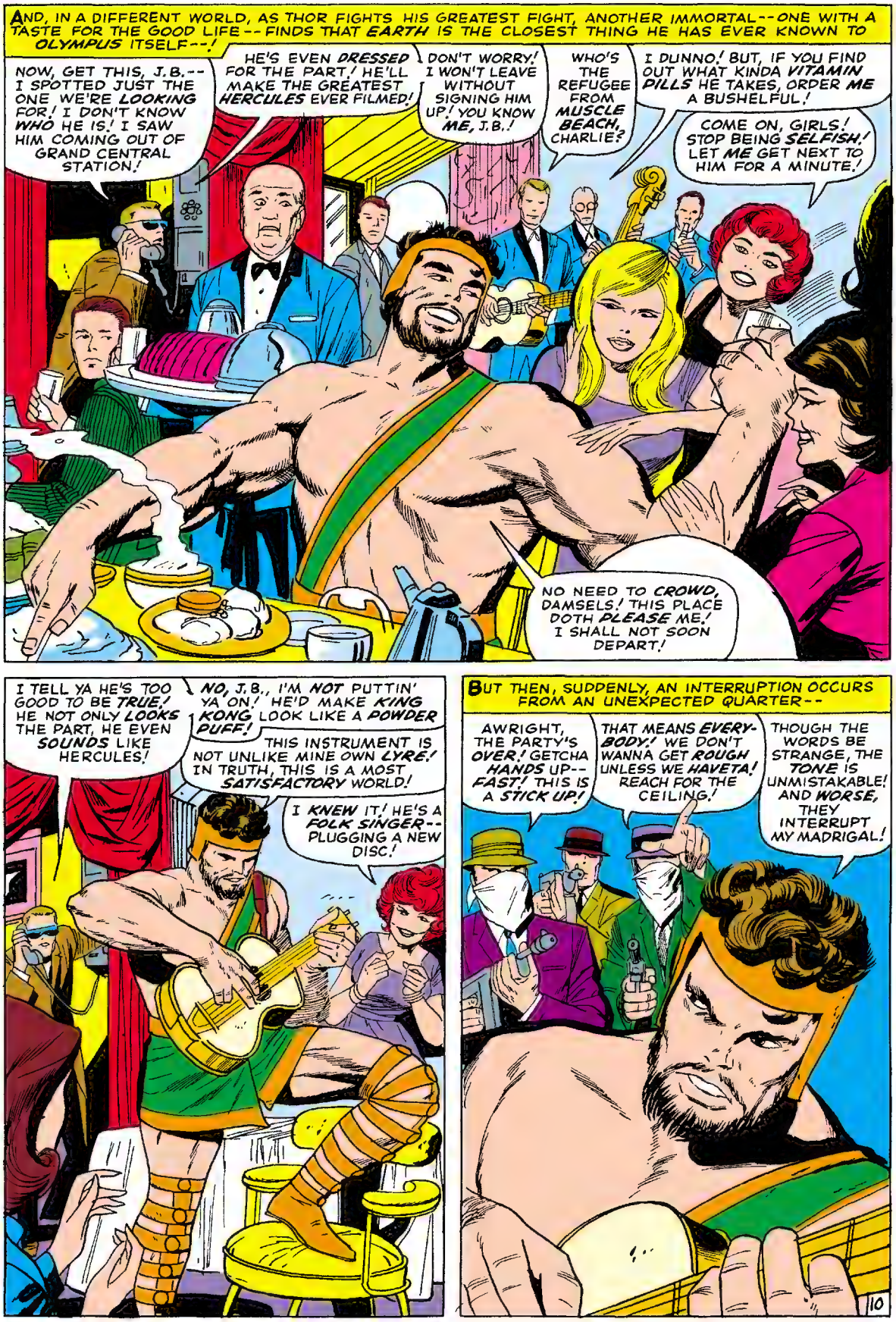

THUS DOES THE THUNDER GOD GREET THE ALL-WISE--UNAWARE THAT ODIN ALREADY KNOWS OF THE SECRET HIS SON HAS REVEALED--!
HAIL, MOST NOBLE FATHER!
ENTER! STAND BEFORE THE ROYAL PRESENCE!


I HAVE BROUGHT THE NORN STONE BACK TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE, SIRE--!
SO BE IT!
IF MY FATHER HATH NO DESIRE TO CONVERSE, THEN BY YOUR LEAVE, I RETURN TO EARTH!
I SAY THEE--NAY!

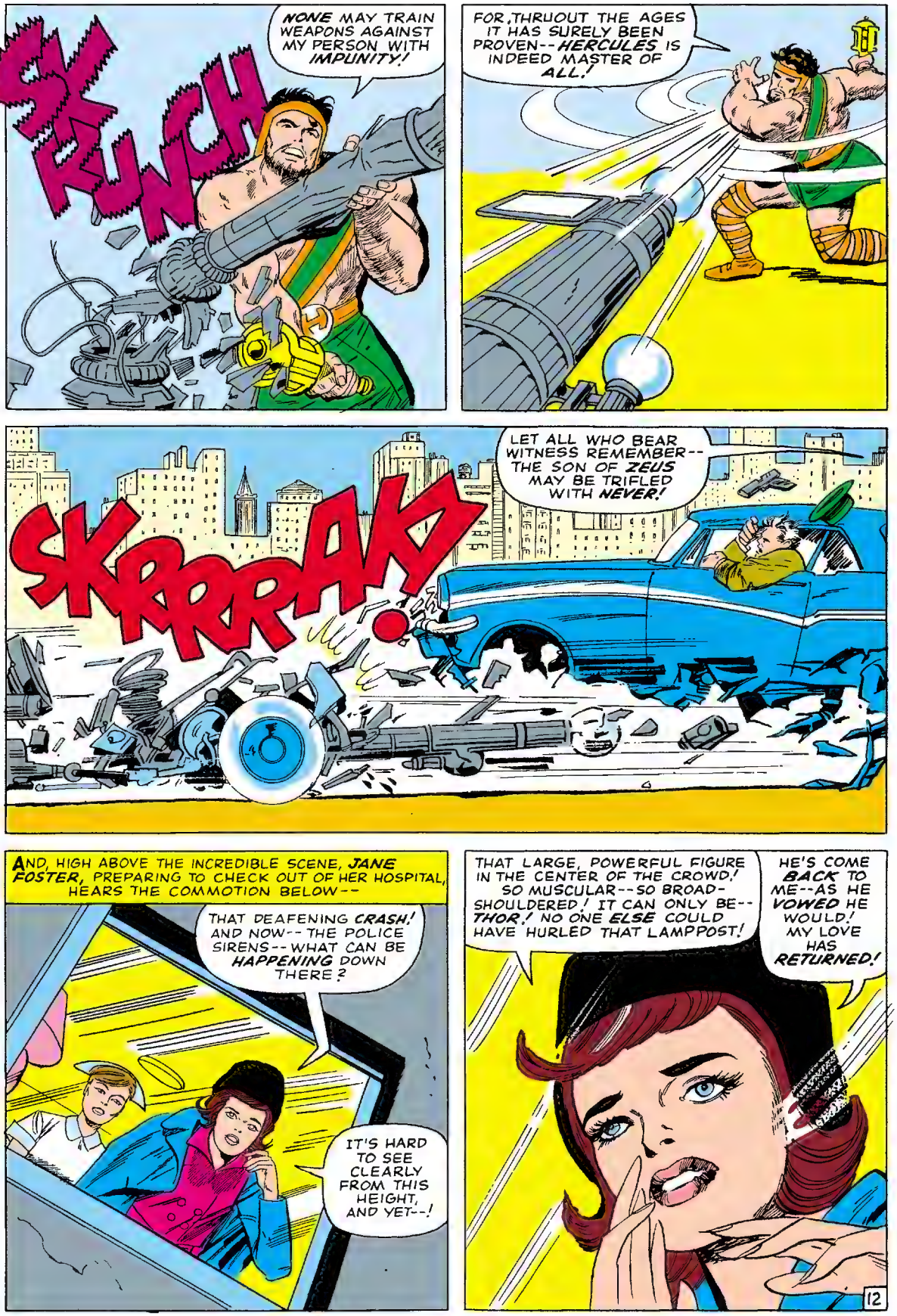
THE FURY IN YOUR EYES-- THE THUNDER IN YOUR VOICE --FATHER-- YOU KNOW!
NOT FOR NOTHING AM I ODIN, THE ALL-WISE!! YES, BLOOD OF MY BLOOD--I KNOW!
BALDER!! COME YOU TO MY SIDE!!
YOU CALLED, SIRE?
THOR! MY FRIEND WHO ART MORE THAN BROTHER TO ME! I EMBRACE THEE!
SILENCE, COURAGEOUS ONE! THERE IS A TASK TO BE DONE--!
MY SON HATH BETRAYED HIS TRUST! YOUR BLADE, LOYAL BALDER! SMITE HIM!!
THOR MUST ENDURE THE RITUAL OF STEEL! AND, SHOULD HE SURVIVE--HE SHALL NEVERMORE SET FOOT UPON THE PLANET EARTH!
PUNISH ME AS YOU WILL-- BUT I CANNOT FORSAKE MY HEART!
NO, FATHER! SHE WHOM I LOVE DWELLS THERE!
THUNDER GOD, THOU HAST NO CHOICE! ODIN HATH SPOKEN!
NO! NOT ALL THE BLADES IN ASGARD--NOT ALL THE POWER IN THE UNIVERSE--SHALL HALT ME NOW!
MY STRENGTH--MY LIMBS--MY VERY LIFE ARE IN THY SERVICE, SIRE! BUT, EVEN A THUNDER GOD HAS THE RIGHT TO LOVE!

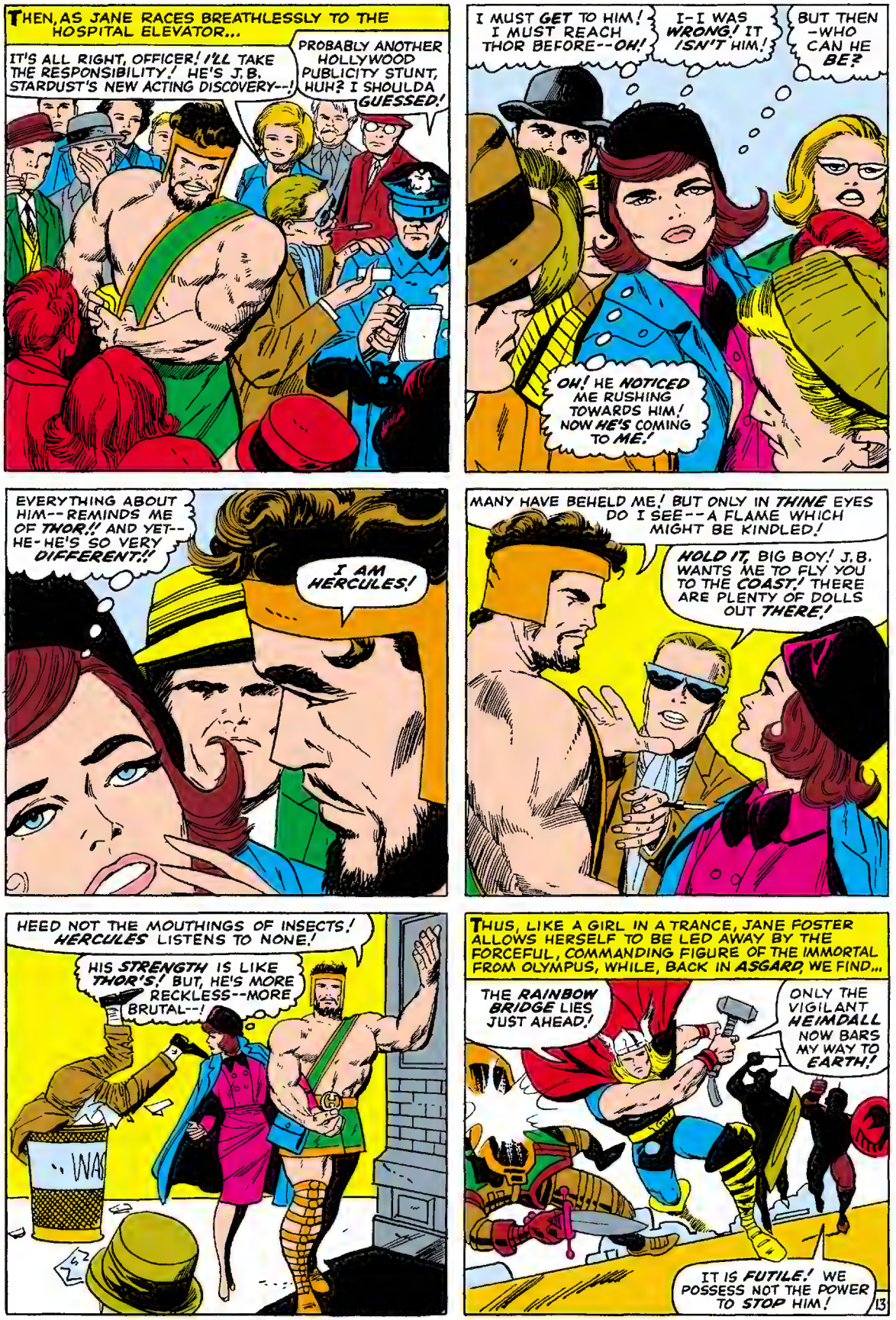

THEN, LIKE A THUNDER-CLAP, BEGINS THE RITUAL OF STEEL --!
HAVE AT HIM, WARRIORS! BY COMMAND OF LORDLY ODIN!
BACK!! BACK, I SAY!! BACK BEFORE THE POWER OF MY MALLET--BACK, BEFORE THE RAGE THAT DOTH FILL MY VERY SOUL--!
BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES!! HE DOTH BATTER US ASIDE, DESPITE OUR NUMBER!

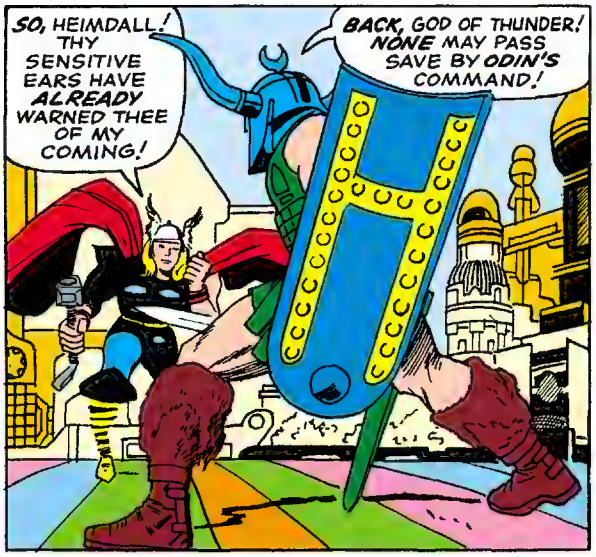

THOUGH EVERY BLADE IN ASGARD BE RAISED AGAINST ME-- THOR FIGHTS ON! THOUGH THE HEAVENS THEM-SELVES TREMBLE AND QUAKE-- THOR FIGHTS ON!!

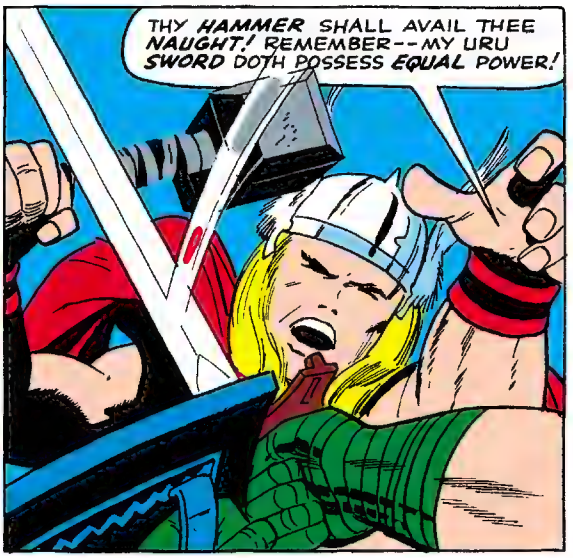

AND, IN A DIFFERENT WORLD, AS THOR FIGHTS HIS GREATEST FIGHT, ANOTHER IMMORTAL--ONE WITH A TASTE FOR THE GOOD LIFE--FINDS THAT EARTH IS THE CLOSEST THING HE HAS EVER KNOWN TO OLYMPUS ITSELF--!
NOW, GET THIS, J.B.--I SPOTTED JUST THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR! I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS! I SAW HIM COMING OUT OF GRAND CENTRAL STATION!
HE'S EVEN DRESSED FOR THE PART! HE'LL MAKE THE GREATEST HERCULES EVER FILMED!
DON'T WORRY! I WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT SIGNING HIM UP! YOU KNOW ME, J.B.!
WHO'S THE REFUGEE FROM MUSCLE BEACH, CHARLIE?
I DUNNO! BUT, IF YOU FIND OUT WHAT KINDA VITAMIN PILLS HE TAKES, ORDER ME A BUSHELFUL!
COME ON, GIRLS! STOP BEING SELFISH! LET ME GET NEXT TO HIM FOR A MINUTE!
NO NEED TO CROWD, DAMSELS! THIS PLACE DOTH PLEASE ME! I SHALL NOT SOON DEPART!
I TELL YA HE'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! HE NOT ONLY LOOKS THE PART, HE EVEN SOUNDS LIKE HERCULES!
NO, J.B., I'M NOT PUTTIN' YA ON! HE'D MAKE KING KONG LOOK LIKE A POWDER PUFF!
THIS INSTRUMENT IS NOT UNLIKE MINE OWN LYRE! IN TRUTH, THIS IS A MOST SATISFACTORY WORLD!
I KNEW IT! HE'S A FOLK SINGER--PLUGGING A NEW DISC!
BUT THEN, SUDDENLY, AN INTERRUPTION OCCURS FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER--
AWRIGHT, THE PARTY'S OVER! GETCHA HANDS UP--FAST! THIS IS A STICK UP!
THAT MEANS EVERYBODY! WE DON'T WANNA GET ROUGH UNLESS WE HAVETA! REACH FOR THE CEILING!
THOUGH THE WORDS BE STRANGE, THE TONE IS UNMISTAKABLE! AND WORSE, THEY INTERRUPT MY MADRIGAL!
10

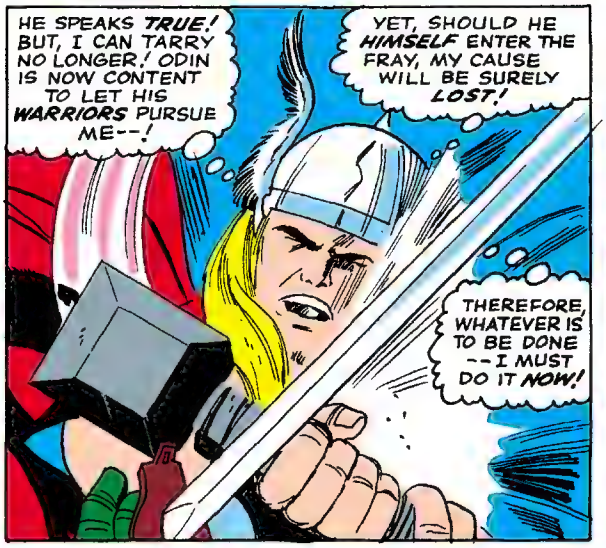
SCURVY KNAVES-- BEGONE!
I DUNNO WHO THAT CREEP IS, BUT NOBODY'S WRECKIN' THIS CAPER IF I CAN HELP IT!
BUKKA BUK
WHAT MONUMENTAL INSOLENCE!! A MORTAL --A MERE MORTAL-- AND HE DOTH ATTACK HERCULES!!
THK THK THK
OUT, THOU UNMITIGATED FLEA-- AND BE THANKFUL THAT I BE IN GENTLE MOOD!
KUH-RACK!
OUTSIDE THE SUPPER CLUB, A TERRIFIED LOOKOUT IN THE GETAWAY CAR APPLIES FULL THROTTLE AS HE CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF THE TITAN WHO STRIDES TOWARDS HIM--
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOIN' ON, BUT I AINT TAKIN' ANY CHANCES! THAT GUY'S TOO BIG TO PLAY PATTYCAKE WITH!
IT IS BEYOND BELIEF!! DO THESE MORTAL WEAKLINGS HOLD THEIR LIVES SO CHEAP THAT THEY WOULD ATTACK HERCULES?!!
CRACK!
SKREEEE
11

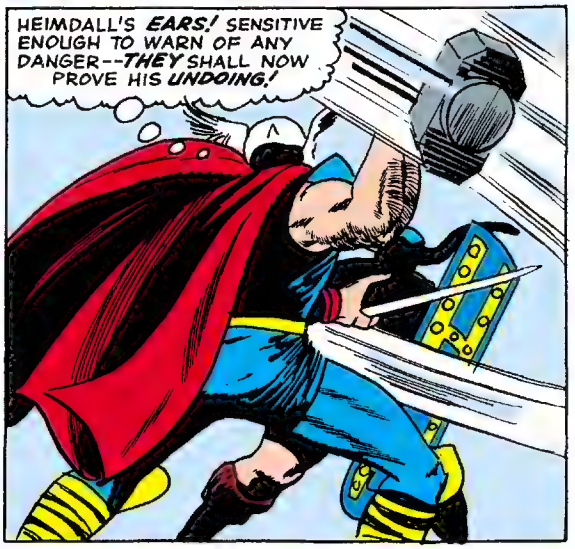

SKRUNCH
NONE MAY TRAIN WEAPONS AGAINST MY PERSON WITH IMPUNITY!
FOR, THRUOUT THE AGES IT HAS SURELY BEEN PROVEN--HERCULES IS INDEED MASTER OF ALL!
LET ALL WHO BEAR WITNESS REMEMBER--THE SON OF ZEUS MAY BE TRIFLED WITH NEVER!
SKRRRRAK!
AND, HIGH ABOVE THE INCREDIBLE SCENE, JANE FOSTER, PREPARING TO CHECK OUT OF HER HOSPITAL, HEARS THE COMMOTION BELOW--
THAT DEAFENING CRASH! AND NOW--THE POLICE SIRENS--WHAT CAN BE HAPPENING DOWN THERE?
IT'S HARD TO SEE CLEARLY FROM THIS HEIGHT, AND YET--!
THAT LARGE, POWERFUL FIGURE IN THE CENTER OF THE CROWD! SO MUSCULAR--SO BROAD-SHOULDERED! IT CAN ONLY BE--THOR! NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE HURLED THAT LAMPPOST!
HE'S COME BACK TO ME--AS HE VOWED HE WOULD! MY LOVE HAS RETURNED!

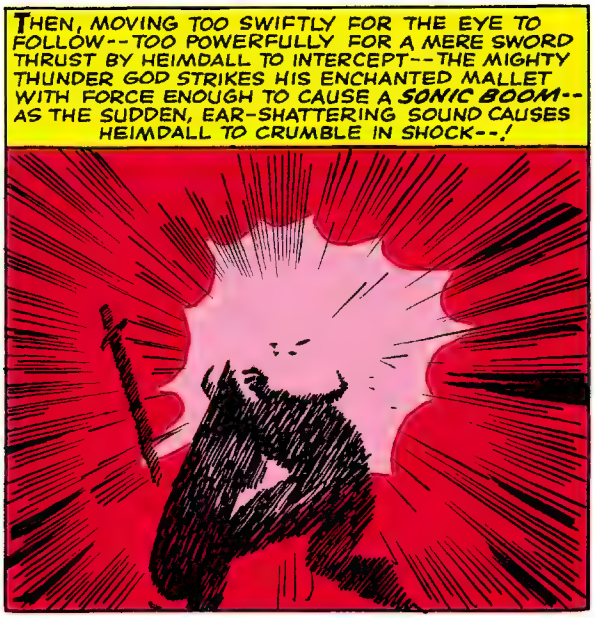

THEN, AS JANE RACES BREATHLESSLY TO THE HOSPITAL ELEVATOR...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, OFFICER! I'LL TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY! HE'S J. B. STARDUST'S NEW ACTING DISCOVERY--!
PROBABLY ANOTHER HOLLYWOOD PUBLICITY STUNT, HUH? I SHOULDA GUESSED!
I MUST GET TO HIM! I MUST REACH THOR BEFORE--OH!
I-I WAS WRONG! IT ISN'T HIM!
BUT THEN -WHO CAN HE BE?
OH! HE NOTICED ME RUSHING TOWARDS HIM! NOW HE'S COMING TO ME!
EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM--REMINDS ME OF THOR!! AND YET-- HE-HE'S SO VERY DIFFERENT!!
I AM HERCULES!
MANY HAVE BEHELD ME! BUT ONLY IN THINE EYES DO I SEE--A FLAME WHICH MIGHT BE KINDLED!
HOLD IT, BIG BOY! J. B. WANTS ME TO FLY YOU TO THE COAST! THERE ARE PLENTY OF DOLLS OUT THERE!
HEED NOT THE MOUTHINGS OF INSECTS! HERCULES LISTENS TO NONE!
HIS STRENGTH IS LIKE THOR'S! BUT, HE'S MORE RECKLESS--MORE BRUTAL--!
THUS, LIKE A GIRL IN A TRANCE, JANE FOSTER ALLOWS HERSELF TO BE LED AWAY BY THE FORCEFUL, COMMANDING FIGURE OF THE IMMORTAL FROM OLYMPUS, WHILE, BACK IN ASGARD, WE FIND...
THE RAINBOW BRIDGE LIES JUST AHEAD!
ONLY THE VIGILANT HEIMDALL NOW BARS MY WAY TO EARTH!
IT IS FUTILE! WE POSSESS NOT THE POWER TO STOP HIM!
13

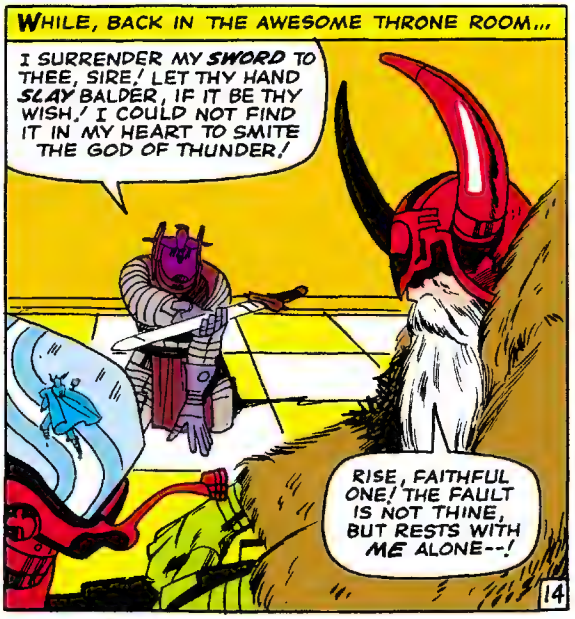

SO, HEIMDALL! THY SENSITIVE EARS HAVE ALREADY WARNED THEE OF MY COMING!
BACK, GOD OF THUNDER! NONE MAY PASS SAVE BY ODIN'S COMMAND!

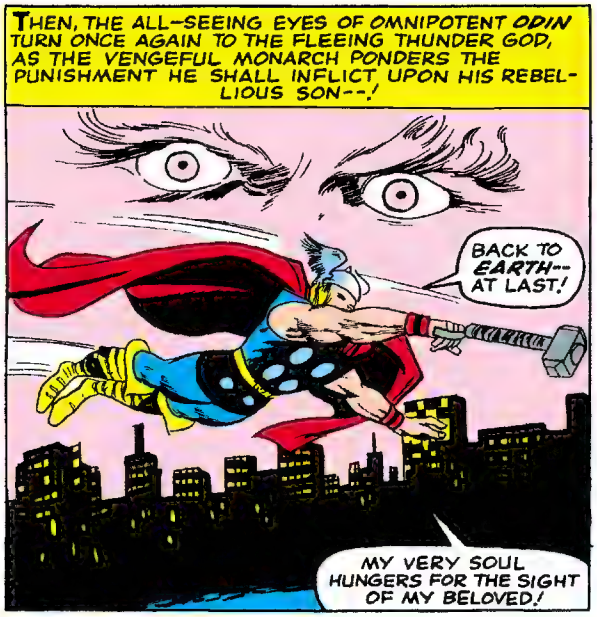

THY HAMMER SHALL AVAIL THEE NAUGHT! REMEMBER--MY URU SWORD DOTH POSSESS EQUAL POWER!


HE SPEAKS TRUE! BUT, I CAN TARRY NO LONGER! ODIN IS NOW CONTENT TO LET HIS WARRIORS PURSUE ME--!
YET, SHOULD HE HIMSELF ENTER THE FRAY, MY CAUSE WILL BE SURELY LOST!
THEREFORE, WHATEVER IS TO BE DONE --I MUST DO IT NOW!

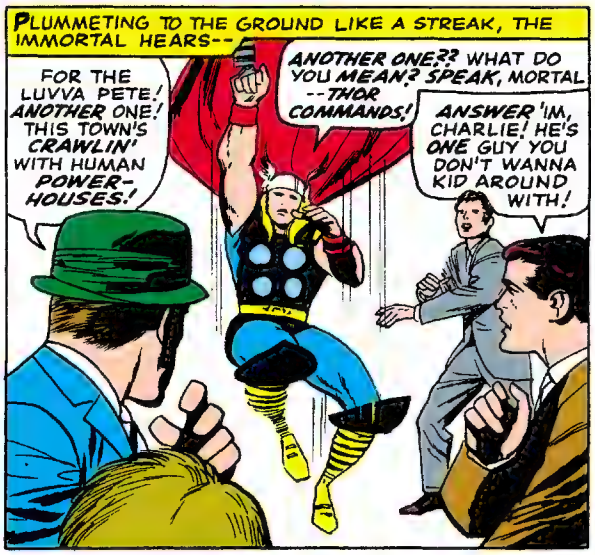

HEIMDALL'S EARS! SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO WARN OF ANY DANGER--THEY SHALL NOW PROVE HIS UNDOING!

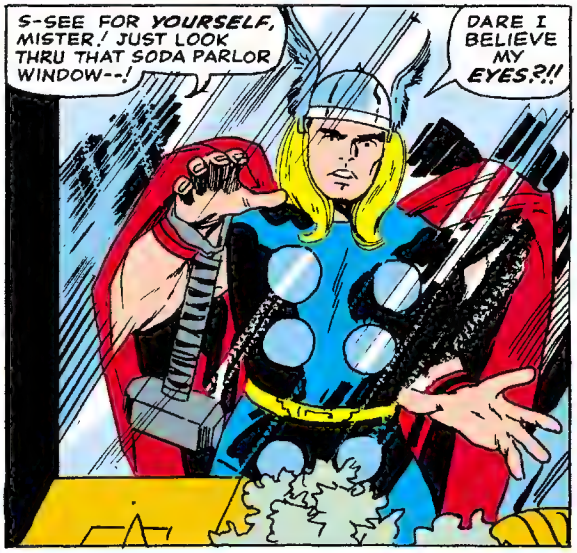

THEN, MOVING TOO SWIFTLY FOR THE EYE TO FOLLOW--TOO POWERFULLY FOR A MERE SWORD THRUST BY HEIMDALL TO INTERCEPT--THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD STRIKES HIS ENCHANTED MALLET WITH FORCE ENOUGH TO CAUSE A SONIC BOOM-- AS THE SUDDEN, EAR-SHATTERING SOUND CAUSES HEIMDALL TO CRUMBLE IN SHOCK--!

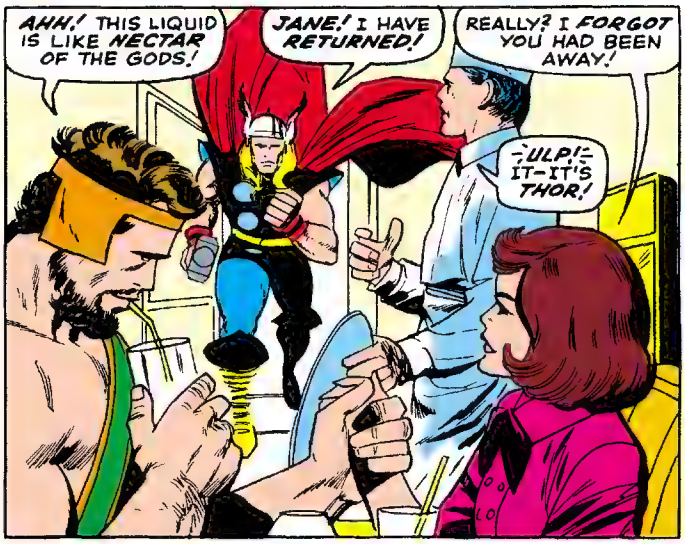

WHILE, BACK IN THE AWESOME THRONE ROOM...
I SURRENDER MY SWORD TO THEE, SIRE! LET THY HAND SLAY BALDER, IF IT BE THY WISH! I COULD NOT FIND IT IN MY HEART TO SMITE THE GOD OF THUNDER!
RISE, FAITHFUL ONE! THE FAULT IS NOT THINE, BUT RESTS WITH ME ALONE--!

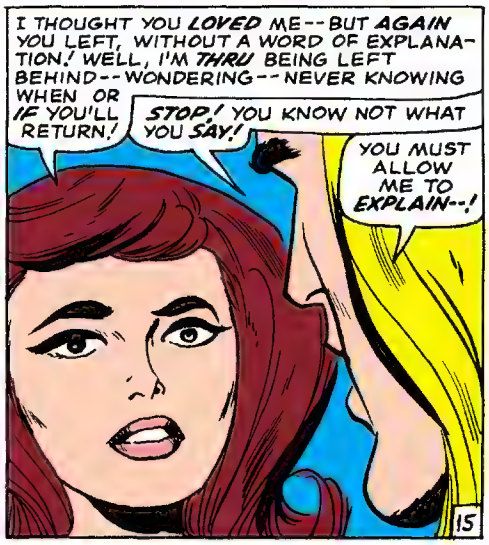

THEN, THE ALL-SEEING EYES OF OMNIPOTENT ODIN TURN ONCE AGAIN TO THE FLEEING THUNDER GOD, AS THE VENGEFUL MONARCH PONDERS THE PUNISHMENT HE SHALL INFLICT UPON HIS REBELLIOUS SON--!
BACK TO EARTH-- AT LAST!
MY VERY SOUL HUNGERS FOR THE SIGHT OF MY BELOVED!

A MILLING CROWD-- ACROSS THE STREET FROM HER HOSPITAL!
CAN IT BE THAT JANE FOSTER IS IN DANGER?!!

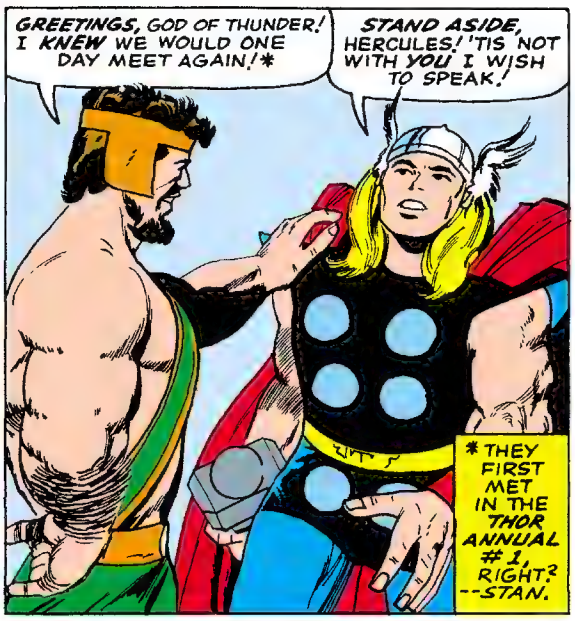

PLUMMETING TO THE GROUND LIKE A STREAK, THE IMMORTAL HEARS--
FOR THE LUVVA PETE! ANOTHER ONE! THIS TOWN'S CRAWLIN' WITH HUMAN POWER-HOUSES!
ANOTHER ONE?? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? SPEAK, MORTAL --THOR COMMANDS!
ANSWER 'IM, CHARLIE! HE'S ONE GUY YOU DON'T WANNA KID AROUND WITH!

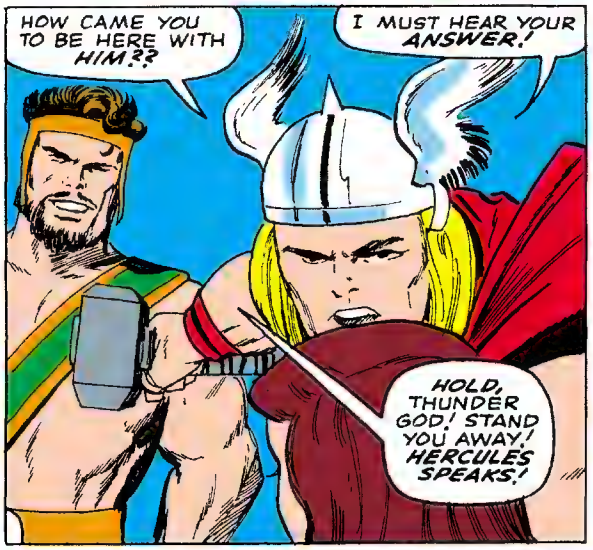

S-SEE FOR YOURSELF, MISTER! JUST LOOK THRU THAT SODA PARLOR WINDOW--!
DARE I BELIEVE MY EYES.?!!

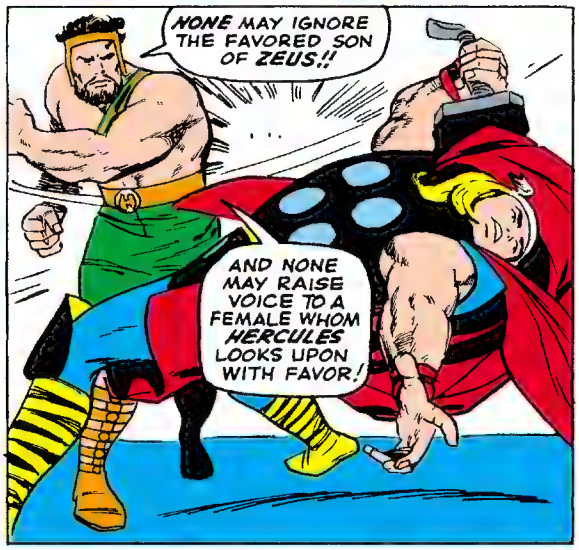

AHH! THIS LIQUID IS LIKE NECTAR OF THE GODS!
JANE! I HAVE RETURNED!
REALLY? I FORGOT YOU HAD BEEN AWAY!
-ULP!- IT-IT'S THOR!

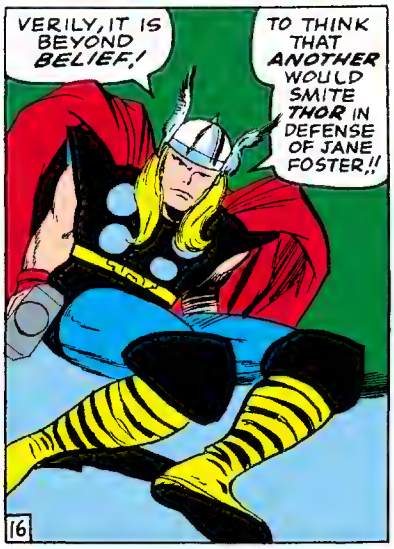

I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME--BUT AGAIN YOU LEFT, WITHOUT A WORD OF EXPLANATION! WELL, I'M THRU BEING LEFT BEHIND--WONDERING--NEVER KNOWING WHEN OR IF YOU'LL RETURN!
STOP! YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU SAY!
YOU MUST ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN--!

DO YOU THINK THAT I WANTED TO BE PARTED FROM YOU??
IF YOU COULD BUT KNOW THE ODDS I FACED TO RETURN TO YOU--!
AND WHAT OF ME? WHAT OF THE LONG, LONELY HOURS-- THE EMPTY, ENDLESS DAYS--??

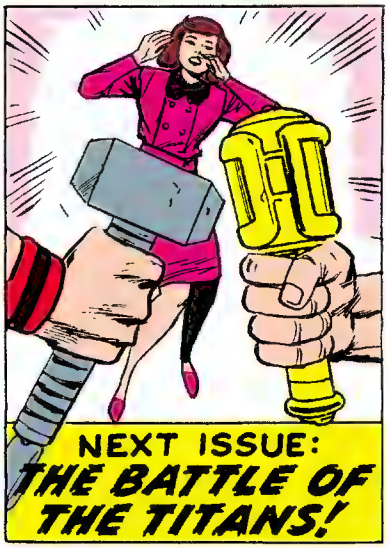

GREETINGS, GOD OF THUNDER! I KNEW WE WOULD ONE DAY MEET AGAIN!*
STAND ASIDE, HERCULES! 'TIS NOT WITH YOU I WISH TO SPEAK!
* THEY FIRST MET IN THE THOR ANNUAL #1, RIGHT? --STAN.


HOW CAME YOU TO BE HERE WITH HIM??
I MUST HEAR YOUR ANSWER!
HOLD, THUNDER GOD! STAND YOU AWAY! HERCULES SPEAKS!


NONE MAY IGNORE THE FAVORED SON OF ZEUS!!
AND NONE MAY RAISE VOICE TO A FEMALE WHOM HERCULES LOOKS UPON WITH FAVOR!


VERILY, IT IS BEYOND BELIEF!
TO THINK THAT ANOTHER WOULD SMITE THOR IN DEFENSE OF JANE FOSTER!!

SLOWLY, THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD RISES TO HIS FEET, HIS EYES BLAZING WITH CATACLYSMIC FURY--HIS VERY SOUL CLAMORING FOR VENGEANCE!
BRAZEN ONE-- DEFEND THYSELF!

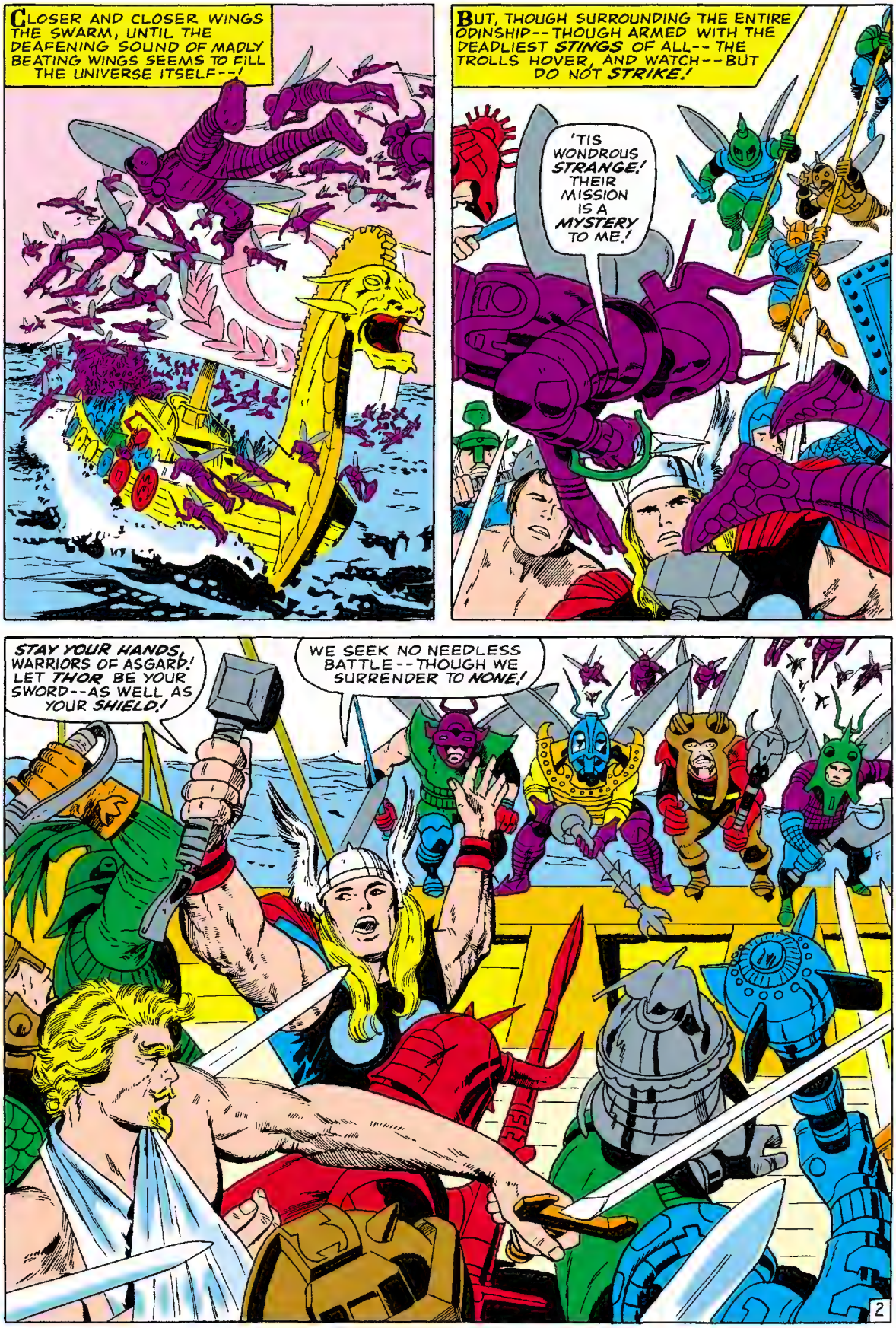

NEXT ISSUE:
THE BATTLE OF THE TITANS!

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!

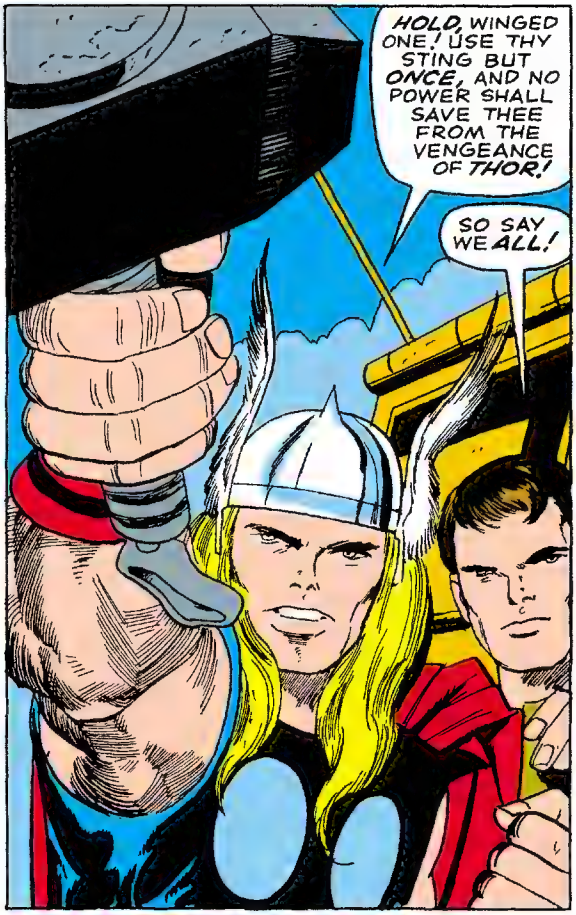
the QUEEN COMMANDS

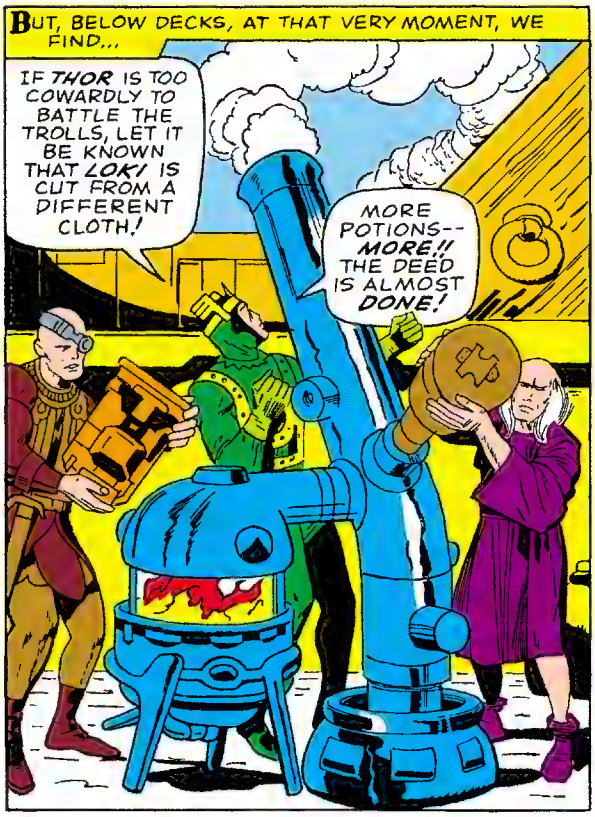
THE FLYING TROLLS OF THRYHEIM ATTACK! SEE HOW THEIR NUMBERS DARKEN THE VERY HEAVENS ABOVE US!
TO ARMS! LET IT BE KNOWN WE SHALL SELL OUR LIVES DEARLY!
THEY ARE COUNTLESS-- LIKE THE SANDS ON THE GOLDEN SHORE! ALAS, THAT FEARLESS VOLSTAGG SHOULD BE SO LARGE A TARGET!
THE FLYING TROLLS OF QUEEN ULA HAVE LEFT THEIR STONE HIVE-- SWARMING TO ATTACK THOR'S MIGHTY CREW OF ARGONAUTS!
AND NOW, BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN, LET US WITNESS THE WONDERS THAT SHALL BEFALL--!

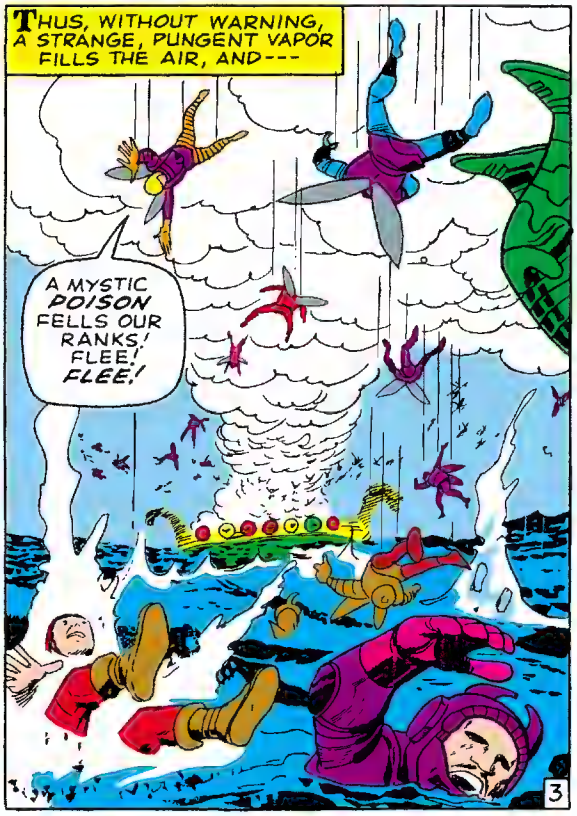
NONE BUT MARVEL'S STAN LEE COULD TELL SUCH A TALE!	NONE BUT MARVEL'S JACK KIRBY COULD DRAW SUCH A TALE!	NONE BUT MARVEL'S VINCE COLLETTA COULD INK SUCH A TALE!	NONE BUT MARVEL'S ARTIE SIMEK COULD BE SUCH A PUSSYCAT!

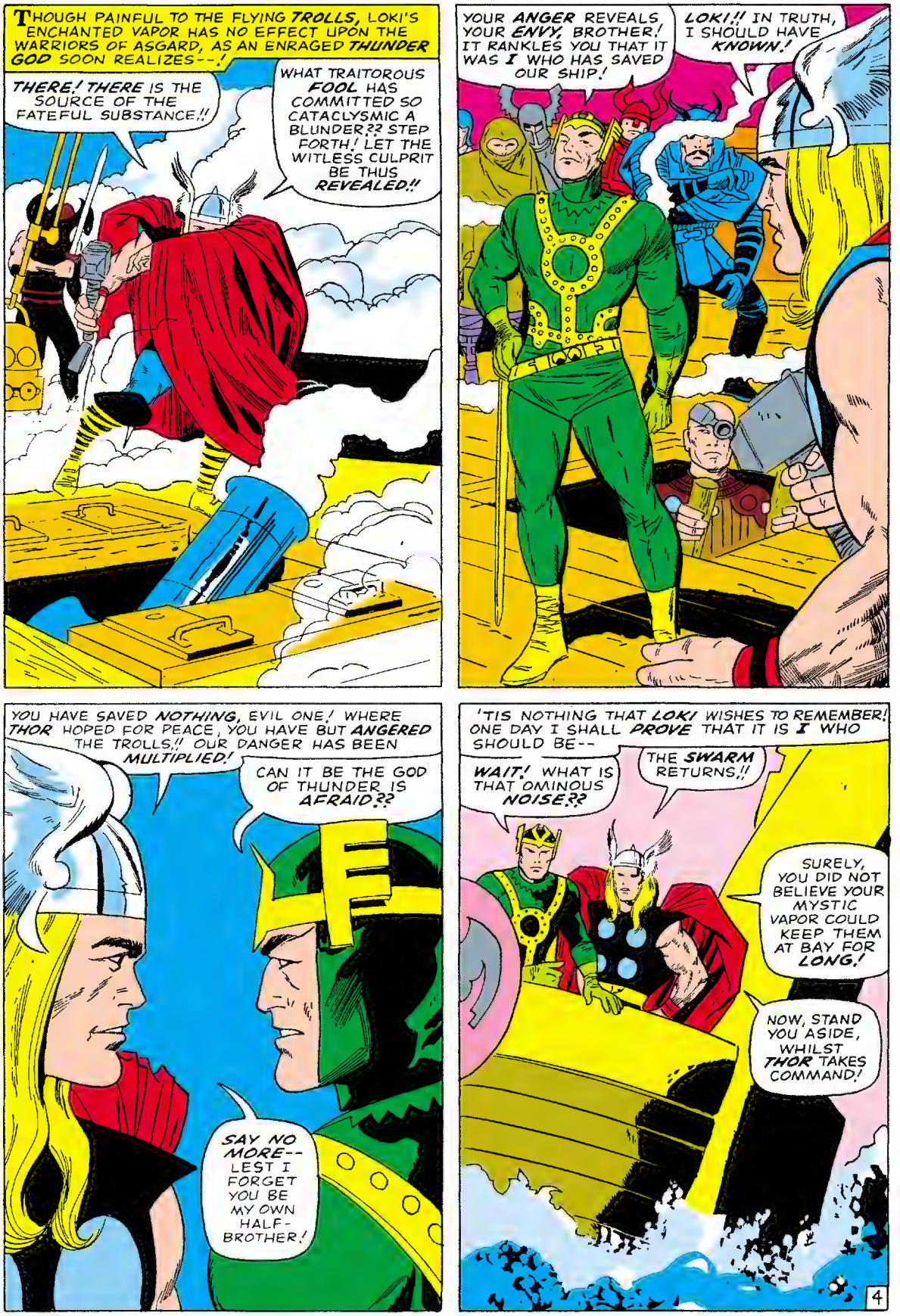

CLOSER AND CLOSER WINGS THE SWARM, UNTIL THE DEAFENING SOUND OF MADLY BEATING WINGS SEEMS TO FILL THE UNIVERSE ITSELF--!
BUT, THOUGH SURROUNDING THE ENTIRE ODINSHIP--THOUGH ARMED WITH THE DEADLIEST STINGS OF ALL--THE TROLLS HOVER, AND WATCH--BUT DO NOT STRIKE!
'TIS WONDROUS STRANGE! THEIR MISSION IS A MYSTERY TO ME!
STAY YOUR HANDS, WARRIORS OF ASGARD! LET THOR BE YOUR SWORD--AS WELL AS YOUR SHIELD!
WE SEEK NO NEEDLESS BATTLE--THOUGH WE SURRENDER TO NONE!

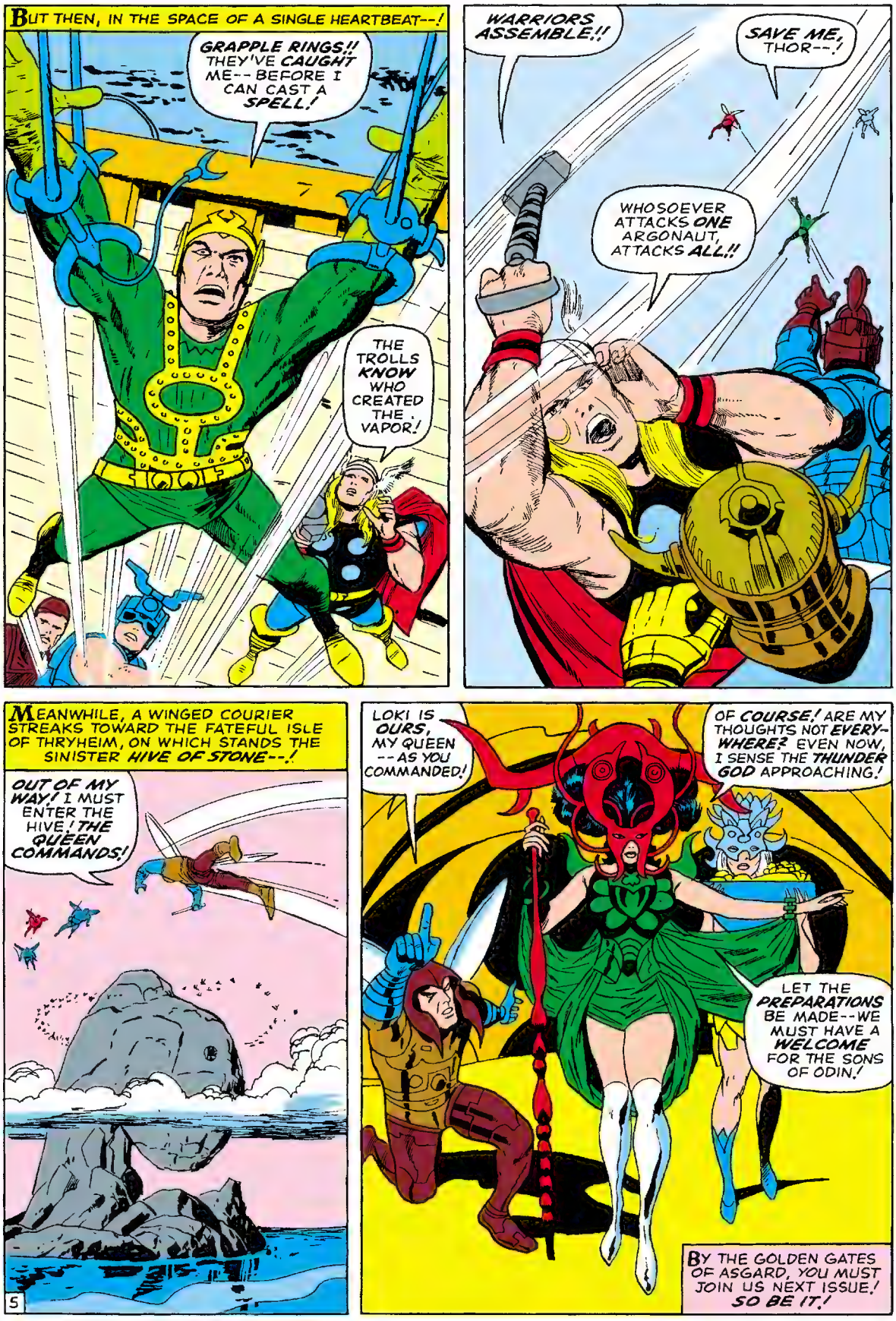
THE WORDS OF THOR ARE HEAVY LADEN WITH WISDOM!
BUT, TO INSURE THAT YOU REMAIN PEACEFUL, WE SHALL DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF OUR STING UPON YON QUIVERING MASS OF BLUBBER--!
I KNOW NOT OF WHOM HE SPEAKS!! BUT, SURELY IT CANNOT BE VOLSTAGG, WHO IS COURAGE INCARNATE!


HOLD, WINGED ONE! USE THY STING BUT ONCE, AND NO POWER SHALL SAVE THEE FROM THE VENGEANCE OF THOR!
SO SAY WE ALL!


BUT, BELOW DECKS, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, WE FIND...
IF THOR IS TOO COWARDLY TO BATTLE THE TROLLS, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT LOKI IS CUT FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH!
MORE POTIONS-- MORE!! THE DEED IS ALMOST DONE!


THUS, WITHOUT WARNING, A STRANGE, PUNGENT VAPOR FILLS THE AIR, AND---
A MYSTIC POISON FELLS OUR RANKS! FLEE! FLEE!
3


THOUGH PAINFUL TO THE FLYING TROLLS, LOKI'S ENCHANTED VAPOR HAS NO EFFECT UPON THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD, AS AN ENRAGED THUNDER GOD SOON REALIZES--!
THERE! THERE IS THE SOURCE OF THE FATEFUL SUBSTANCE!!
WHAT TRAITOROUS FOOL HAS COMMITTED SO CATACLYSMIC A BLUNDER?? STEP FORTH! LET THE WITLESS CULPRIT BE THUS REVEALED!!
YOUR ANGER REVEALS YOUR ENVY, BROTHER! IT RANKLES YOU THAT IT WAS I WHO HAS SAVED OUR SHIP!
LOKI!! IN TRUTH, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!
YOU HAVE SAVED NOTHING, EVIL ONE! WHERE THOR HOPED FOR PEACE, YOU HAVE BUT ANGERED THE TROLLS!! OUR DANGER HAS BEEN MULTIPLIED!
CAN IT BE THE GOD OF THUNDER IS AFRAID??
SAY NO MORE-- LEST I FORGET YOU BE MY OWN HALF-BROTHER!
'TIS NOTHING THAT LOKI WISHES TO REMEMBER! ONE DAY I SHALL PROVE THAT IT IS I WHO SHOULD BE--
WAIT! WHAT IS THAT OMINOUS NOISE??
THE SWARM RETURNS!!
SURELY, YOU DID NOT BELIEVE YOUR MYSTIC VAPOR COULD KEEP THEM AT BAY FOR LONG!
NOW, STAND YOU ASIDE, WHILST THOR TAKES COMMAND!
4


BUT THEN, IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE HEARTBEAT--!
GRAPPLE RINGS!! THEY'VE CAUGHT ME-- BEFORE I CAN CAST A SPELL!
THE TROLLS KNOW WHO CREATED THE VAPOR!
WARRIORS ASSEMBLE!!
SAVE ME, THOR--!
WHOSOEVER ATTACKS ONE ARGONAUT, ATTACKS ALL!!
MEANWHILE, A WINGED COURIER STREAKS TOWARD THE FATEFUL ISLE OF THRYHEIM, ON WHICH STANDS THE SINISTER HIVE OF STONE--!
OUT OF MY WAY! I MUST ENTER THE HIVE! THE QUEEN COMMANDS!
LOKI IS OURS, MY QUEEN --AS YOU COMMANDED!
OF COURSE! ARE MY THOUGHTS NOT EVERYWHERE? EVEN NOW, I SENSE THE THUNDER GOD APPROACHING!
LET THE PREPARATIONS BE MADE--WE MUST HAVE A WELCOME FOR THE SONS OF ODIN!
BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD, YOU MUST JOIN US NEXT ISSUE! SO BE IT!
5

THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
126 MAR
"WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY!"
12¢
IND.

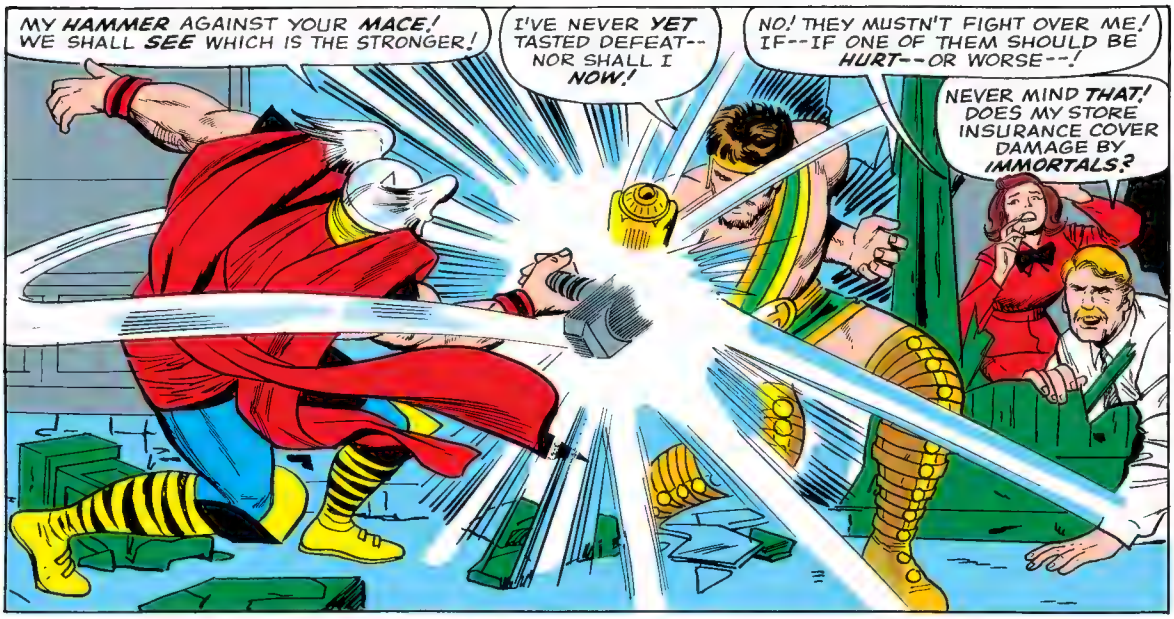
THE MIGHTY THOR!

"WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY!"

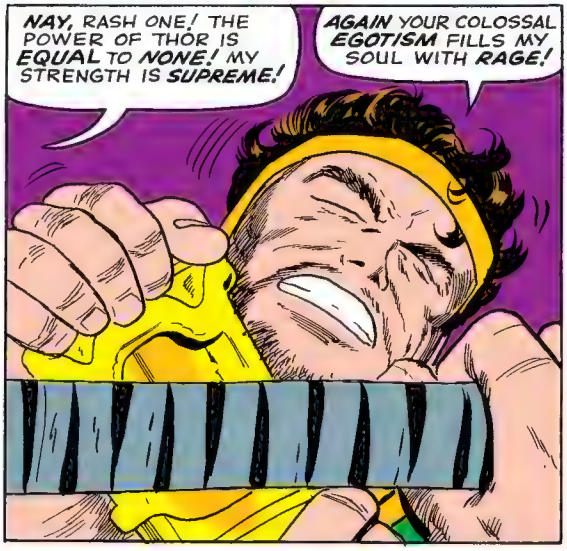
NOT EVEN HERCULES, SON OF ZEUS, MAY STRIKE THOR WITH IMPUNITY!
ANOTHER MIGHTY MARVEL INSTANT RESUMÉ:
HERCULES HAS COME TO EARTH! HE'S GOT THE BIG EYE FOR THOR'S CHICK!
GOLDILOCKS IS BUGGED, BUT GOOD!
SO, THEY'RE FIGHTING IT OUT!
THERE! THAT'S AS PAINLESS AS WE CAN MAKE IT!
FEATURING: THE LONG-AWAITED CLASH OF TITANS BETWEEN MIGHTY THOR and HERCULES!
YOUR OVERBEARING CONCEIT IS A STANDING JOKE IN OLYMPUS, THUNDER GOD! BUT NOW I'LL RID YOU OF IT-- FOREVER!

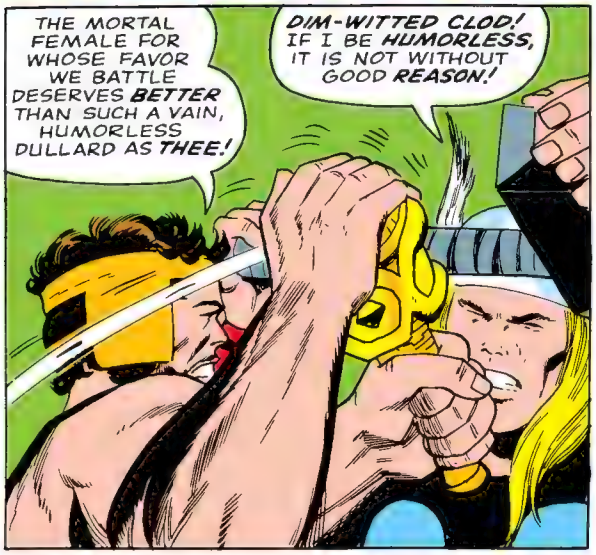
THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE! AND HERE ARE THE GUYS WHO ALMOST COULDN'T DO IT--

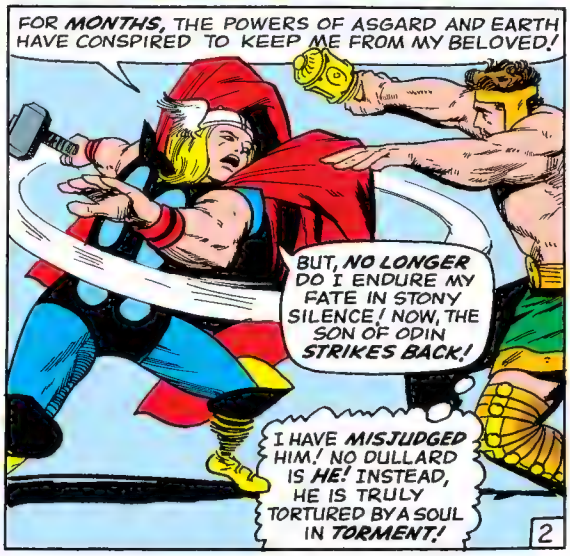
STAN LEE	JACK KIRBY	V. COLLETTA	ARTIE SIMEK
THE LITERARY LION!	THE PENCILLING PUSSYCAT!	THE DELINEATING DRAGON!	THE LETTERING LOOKS IT!

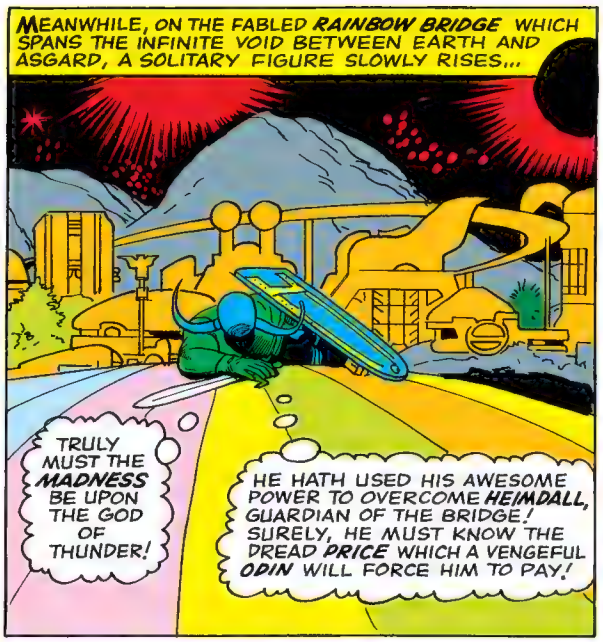

MY HAMMER AGAINST YOUR MACE! WE SHALL SEE WHICH IS THE STRONGER!
I'VE NEVER YET TASTED DEFEAT-- NOR SHALL I NOW!
NO! THEY MUSTN'T FIGHT OVER ME! IF--IF ONE OF THEM SHOULD BE HURT--OR WORSE--!
NEVER MIND THAT! DOES MY STORE INSURANCE COVER DAMAGE BY IMMORTALS?

I DO NOT SEEK TO HARM YOU! MERELY TO SHOW THAT POWER MISUSED IS POWER ABUSED!
WHAT MANNER OF WARRIOR ARE YOU? YOUR LIPS SPOUT FABLES, WHILST YOUR SINEWS ARE THE EQUAL OF HERCULES!

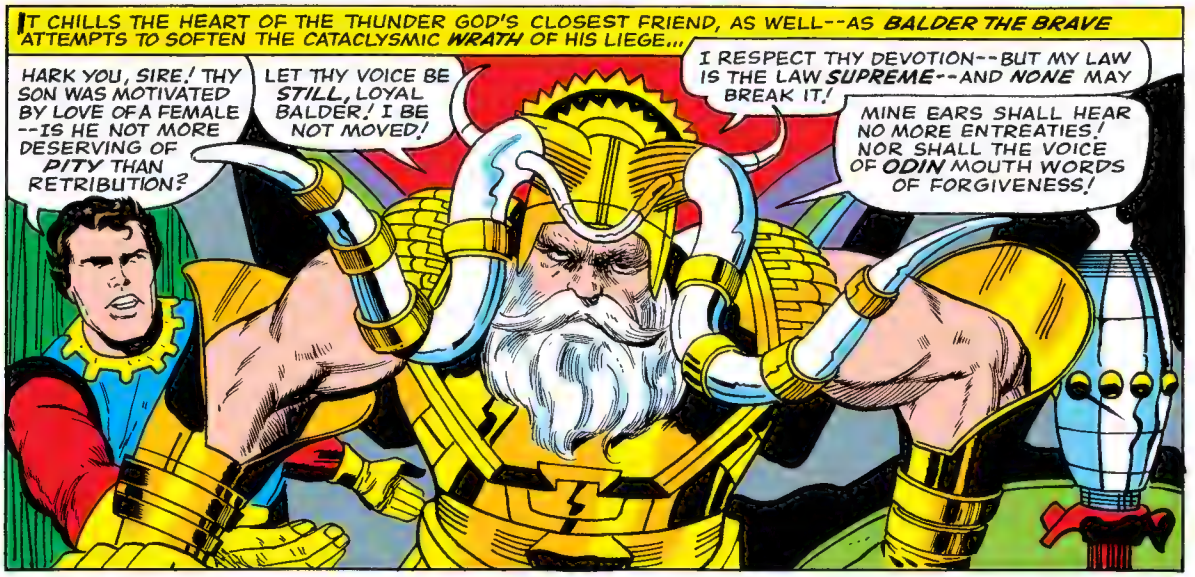

NAY, RASH ONE! THE POWER OF THOR IS EQUAL TO NONE! MY STRENGTH IS SUPREME!
AGAIN YOUR COLOSSAL EGOTISM FILLS MY SOUL WITH RAGE!

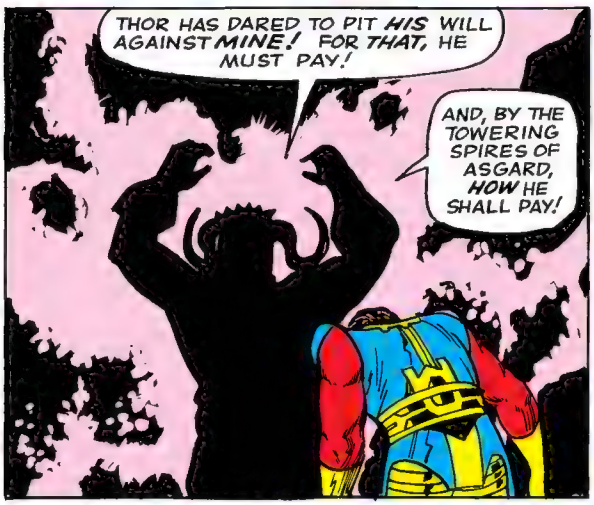

THE MORTAL FEMALE FOR WHOSE FAVOR WE BATTLE DESERVES BETTER THAN SUCH A VAIN, HUMORLESS DULLARD AS THEE!
DIM-WITTED CLOD! IF I BE HUMORLESS, IT IS NOT WITHOUT GOOD REASON!

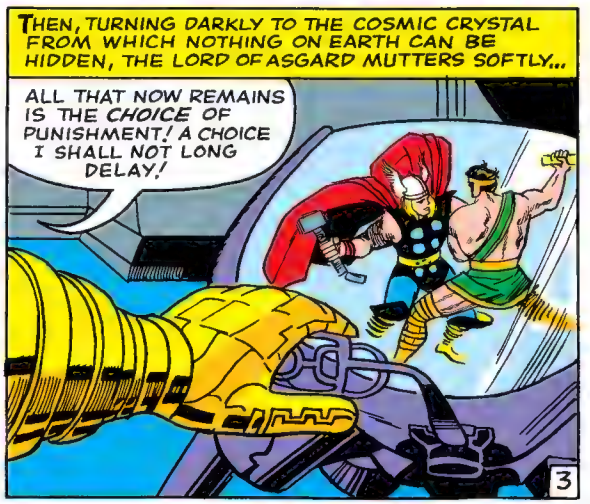

FOR MONTHS, THE POWERS OF ASGARD AND EARTH HAVE CONSPIRED TO KEEP ME FROM MY BELOVED!
BUT, NO LONGER DO I ENDURE MY FATE IN STONY SILENCE! NOW, THE SON OF ODIN STRIKES BACK!
I HAVE MISJUDGED HIM! NO DULLARD IS HE! INSTEAD, HE IS TRULY TORTURED BY A SOUL IN TORMENT!
2


MEANWHILE, ON THE FABLED RAINBOW BRIDGE WHICH SPANS THE INFINITE VOID BETWEEN EARTH AND ASGARD, A SOLITARY FIGURE SLOWLY RISES...
TRULY MUST THE MADNESS BE UPON THE GOD OF THUNDER!
HE HATH USED HIS AWESOME POWER TO OVERCOME HEIMDALL, GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE! SURELY, HE MUST KNOW THE DREAD PRICE WHICH A VENGEFUL ODIN WILL FORCE HIM TO PAY!

AND, THRUOUT THE GOLDEN REALM, AS THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD RECOVER FROM THE INDESCRIBABLE ONSLAUGHT OF MIGHTY THOR, ALL SEEM TO SHARE THE SAME SOLEMN THOUGHT...
WHAT PUNISHMENT WILL THOR RECEIVE AT THE HANDS OF REGAL ODIN?
IT CHILLS ME TO THE MARROW WHEN I THINK UPON IT!

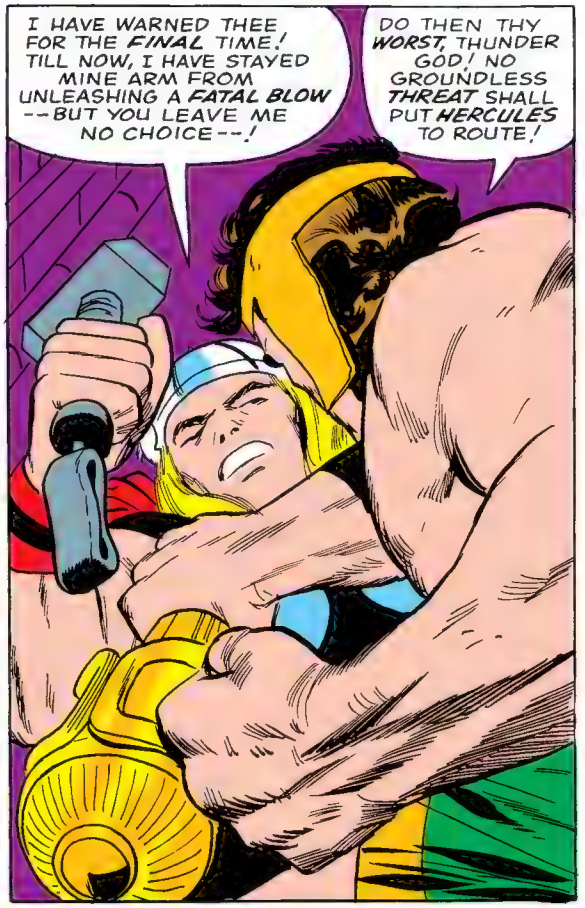

IT CHILLS THE HEART OF THE THUNDER GOD'S CLOSEST FRIEND, AS WELL--AS BALDER THE BRAVE ATTEMPTS TO SOFTEN THE CATACLYSMIC WRATH OF HIS LIEGE...
HARK YOU, SIRE! THY SON WAS MOTIVATED BY LOVE OF A FEMALE --IS HE NOT MORE DESERVING OF PITY THAN RETRIBUTION?
LET THY VOICE BE STILL, LOYAL BALDER! I BE NOT MOVED!
I RESPECT THY DEVOTION--BUT MY LAW IS THE LAW SUPREME--AND NONE MAY BREAK IT!
MINE EARS SHALL HEAR NO MORE ENTREATIES! NOR SHALL THE VOICE OF ODIN MOUTH WORDS OF FORGIVENESS!


THOR HAS DARED TO PIT HIS WILL AGAINST MINE! FOR THAT, HE MUST PAY!
AND, BY THE TOWERING SPIRES OF ASGARD, HOW HE SHALL PAY!


THEN, TURNING DARKLY TO THE COSMIC CRYSTAL FROM WHICH NOTHING ON EARTH CAN BE HIDDEN, THE LORD OF ASGARD MUTTERS SOFTLY...
ALL THAT NOW REMAINS IS THE CHOICE OF PUNISHMENT! A CHOICE I SHALL NOT LONG DELAY!

BUT, IN THE MORTAL WORLD BELOW, THOR CONTINUES HIS THUNDEROUS ONSLAUGHT--UNAWARE OF THE DIRE FATE WHICH AWAITS HIM--!
HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER MAKES A LIVING MOCKERY OF MINE OWN MACE--EVEN AS THE POWER OF HIS LIMBS IS EASILY THE EQUAL OF MINE OWN!
BACK, THOU BLUSTERING BRAGGART! WELL MAY THOU THANK WHATEVER GODS THOU PRAYEST TO THAT I HURL MY HAMMER NOT TO DESTROY, BUT TO HUMBLE THEE!
LET NO MORTAL FEEL THE PANGS OF FEAR! ONLY HERCULES IS TARGET FOR MY URU MALLET! ALL OTHERS SHALL BE UNSCATHED!
HIS HAMMER RETURNED TO HIM--PASSING OVER THE HEADS OF THE MORTAL ASSEMBLAGE!
BE THOU WARNED, SCION OF ASGARD! NOW THAT THE FULL MEASURE OF THY STRENGTH IS REVEALED, I HUNGER FOR MORE BATTLE!
FOR NOTHING PLEASES THE HEART OF HERCULES SO MUCH AS A FOE WHO CAN OFFER A CHALLENGE TO MY MATCHLESS POWER!
HE IS AS THOR HAD BEEN, IN THE HALCYON DAYS OF YORE! HE THRIVES ON COMBAT AS THE BLOSSOMS THRIVE ON RAIN!
BUT I AM TOO HEAVILY-LADEN WITH CARE TO TREAT THIS ENCOUNTER AS A LARK! IT MUST BE ENDED--AND SOON!
SSKKRUNTCH!
HAH! HOW PUNY ARE THE PRODUCTS OF MERE MORTALS!! HOW THEY SHATTER AND CRUMBLE BEFORE THE MIGHT OF HERCULES!
STRENGTH ALONE IS A HOLLOW VIRTUE, SON OF ZEUS!
WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, WITHOUT RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE WEAKER THAN THEE--THY POWER RESTS ONLY ON PILLARS OF SAND!
4

SUDDENLY, THE UNPREDICTABLE GREEK IMMORTAL HURLS HIMSELF FROM THE WRECKED VEHICLES, LEAPING AT HIS CAPED FOE WITH THE FORCE OF A JUGGERNAUT--!
FIE UPON CONSCIENCE!! I LEAVE OTHERS TO DWELL UPON THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF MATTERS!
AS FOR ME, THE ECSTASY OF BATTLE IS REWARD ENOW!


I HAVE WARNED THEE FOR THE FINAL TIME! TILL NOW, I HAVE STAYED MINE ARM FROM UNLEASHING A FATAL BLOW --BUT YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE--!
DO THEN THY WORST, THUNDER GOD! NO GROUNDLESS THREAT SHALL PUT HERCULES TO ROUTE!

BY THE MAJESTY OF MIGHTY OLYMPUS!! NEVER BEFORE HAS ANY BEING BROKEN THE GRIP OF HERCULES TO ESCAPE MY MOST POTENT BLOW!

EVEN ON THY BACK, THOU ART A FOE TO BE FEARED! BUT, MY MACE SHALL GIVE THEE PAUSE!
THOR IS NOT IMPRESSED! THY WORDS DO LITTLE MORE THAN BOLSTER THINE OWN FALTERING CONFIDENCE!

ONCE MORE, THE MATCHLESS POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD ENABLES HIM TO ROLL CLEAR OF HERCULES' CYCLONIC BLOW, AS THE IMMORTAL'S *MACE* SHATTERS THE VERY GROUND BENEATH THEM, CAUSING THE TWO TITANIC COMBATANTS TO PLUNGE ATOP A SPEEDING *TRAIN* IN THE SUBWAY TUNNEL BELOW....!

5 LOCAL

WHOOM!

OBLIVIOUS TO ALL AROUND THEM, THE TWO RAMPAGING GOLIATHS FIGHT ON, AS THE SPEEDING STEEL CAR BENEATH THEIR FEET ROARS TOWARDS ITS NEXT STOP--AN ELEVATED OPEN-AIR STATION--!

ONCE AGAIN I *BESEECH* THEE, HERCULES--HEED MY WORDS! LET THIS SENSELESS BATTLE *CEASE!*

THY PLEA--COMING FROM ANY *OTHER* LIPS--WOULD BESPEAK RANK *COWARDICE!*

YET, I KNOW 'TIS NOT *FEAR* --BUT *CONCERN* THAT CAUSED THY UTTERANCE!

BUT THE VERY *PRIDE* OF HERCULES IS AT STAKE! THE VICTORY MUST BE *MINE* ERE MY ARM WILL BE STILLED!

SO BE IT! UPON THINE *OWN* HEAD THEN SHALL BE THAT WHICH BEFALLS!

THAT *NOISE!* THAT *POUNDING!* WHAT'S *HAPPENING* UP THERE!

WE'VE REACHED THE STATION! EVERYONE *OUT*--QUICKLY!

WE CAN END THIS AT *ONCE*, GOD OF THUNDER! MERELY MOUTH THE WORDS--*I YIELD TO THEE!*

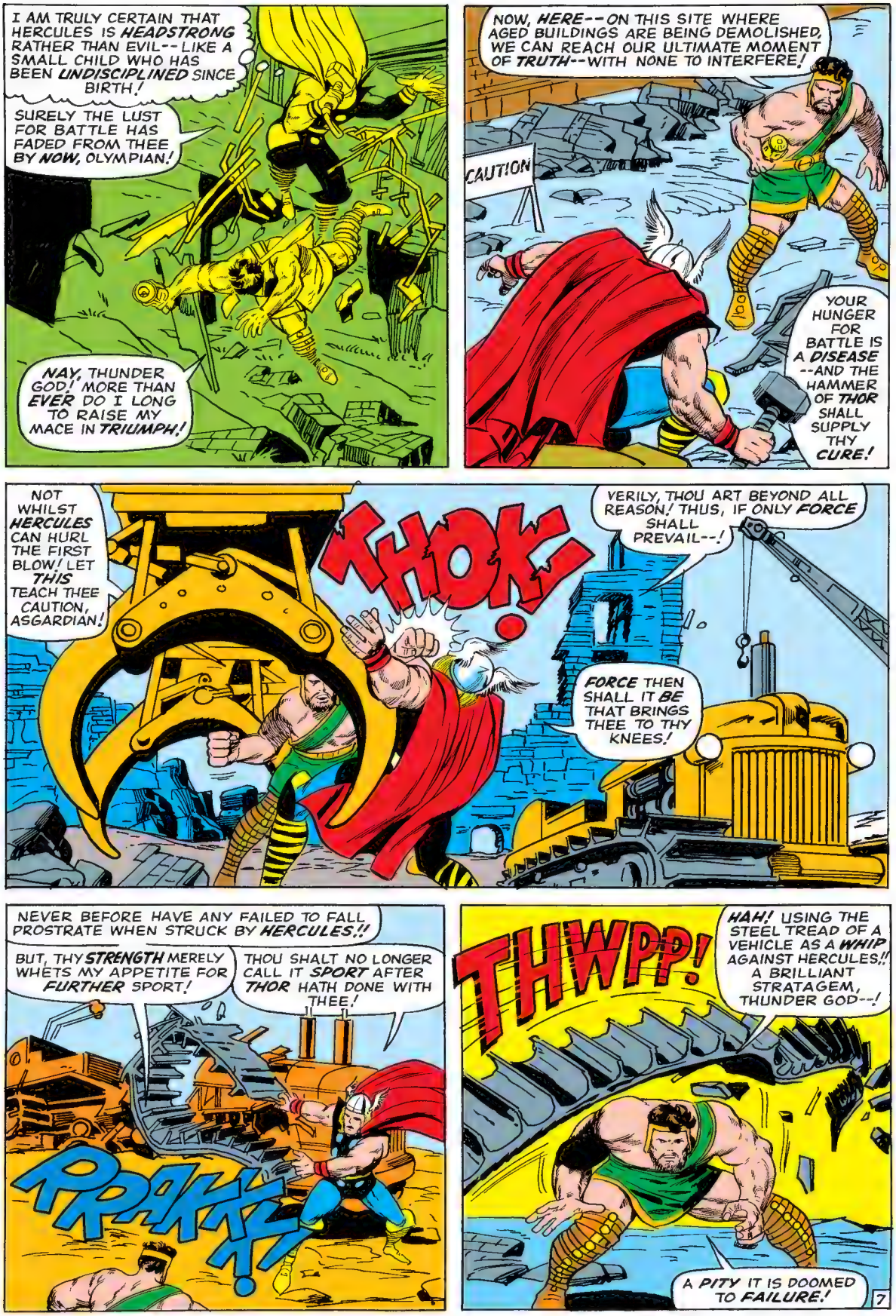
MAY I NE'ER GAZE UPON *VALHALLA* ERE SUCH WORDS ESCAPE THE LIPS OF *THOR!*

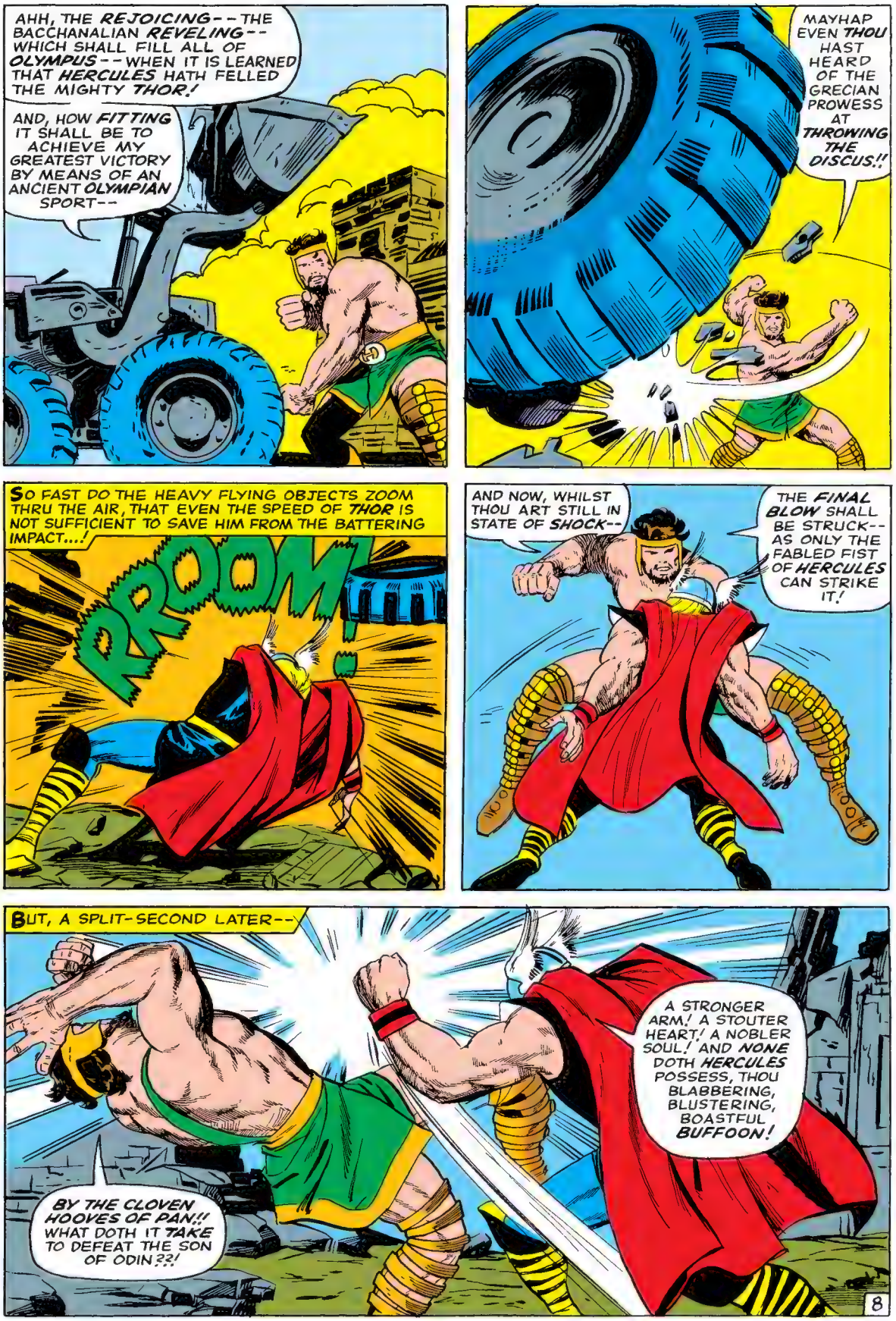
THE SUBWAYS WERE BAD ENOUGH TILL NOW--BUT *THIS* IS *RIDICULOUS!*

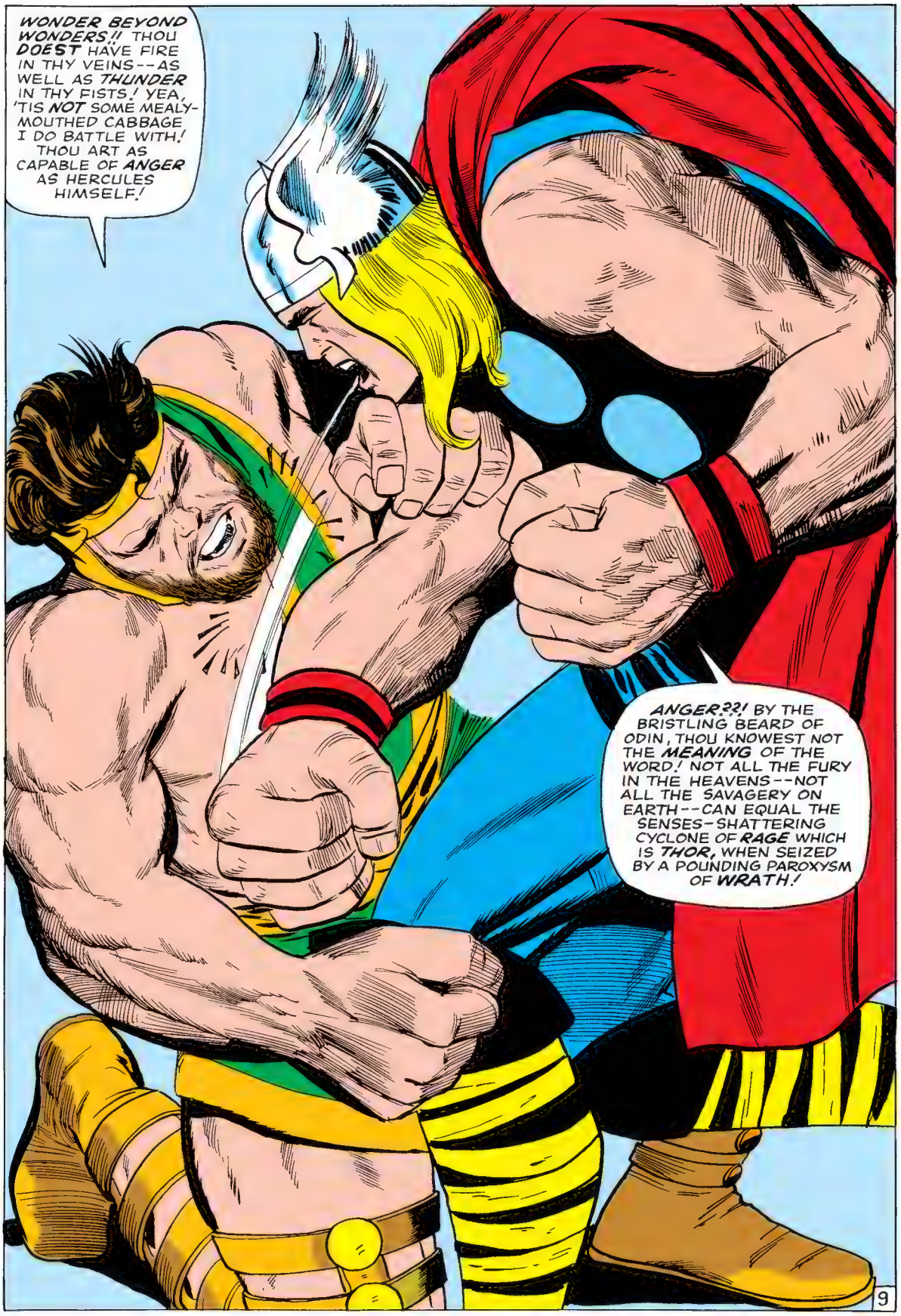
ONE FINAL BLOW--WITH ALL MY STRENGTH--WOULD SURELY *END* THIS USELESS AFFAIR!

AND YET, I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO DEAL SO HARSHLY WITH THE SON OF ZEUS!

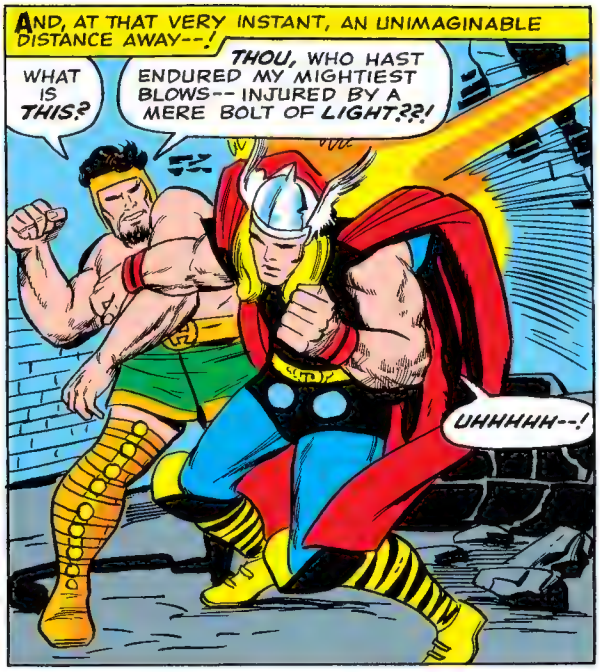
CRASH!

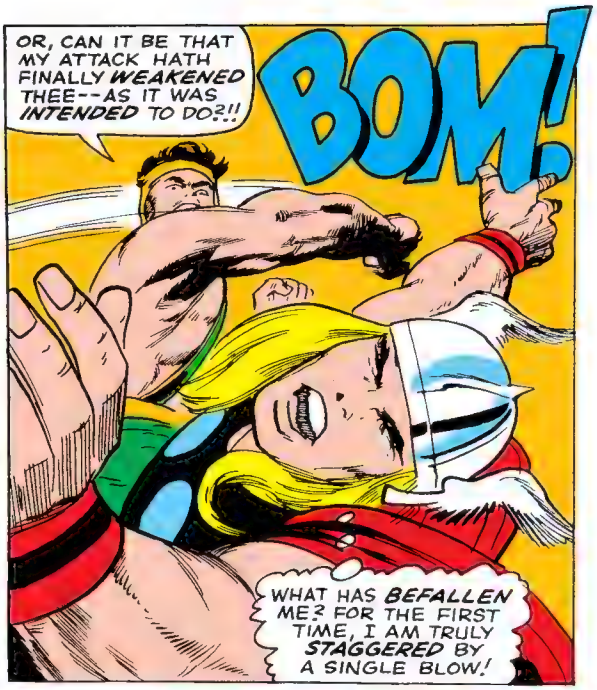

I AM TRULY CERTAIN THAT HERCULES IS HEADSTRONG RATHER THAN EVIL--LIKE A SMALL CHILD WHO HAS BEEN UNDISCIPLINED SINCE BIRTH!
SURELY THE LUST FOR BATTLE HAS FADED FROM THEE BY NOW, OLYMPIAN!
NAY, THUNDER GOD! MORE THAN EVER DO I LONG TO RAISE MY MACE IN TRIUMPH!
NOW, HERE--ON THIS SITE WHERE AGED BUILDINGS ARE BEING DEMOLISHED, WE CAN REACH OUR ULTIMATE MOMENT OF TRUTH--WITH NONE TO INTERFERE!
CAUTION
YOUR HUNGER FOR BATTLE IS A DISEASE --AND THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL SUPPLY THY CURE!
NOT WHILST HERCULES CAN HURL THE FIRST BLOW! LET THIS TEACH THEE CAUTION, ASGARDIAN!
THOK!
VERILY, THOU ART BEYOND ALL REASON! THUS, IF ONLY FORCE SHALL PREVAIL--!
FORCE THEN SHALL IT BE THAT BRINGS THEE TO THY KNEES!
NEVER BEFORE HAVE ANY FAILED TO FALL PROSTRATE WHEN STRUCK BY HERCULES!!
BUT, THY STRENGTH MERELY WHETS MY APPETITE FOR FURTHER SPORT!
THOU SHALT NO LONGER CALL IT SPORT AFTER THOR HATH DONE WITH THEE!
PRAKK!
THWPP!
HAH! USING THE STEEL TREAD OF A VEHICLE AS A WHIP AGAINST HERCULES!! A BRILLIANT STRATAGEM, THUNDER GOD--!
A PITY IT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE!
7

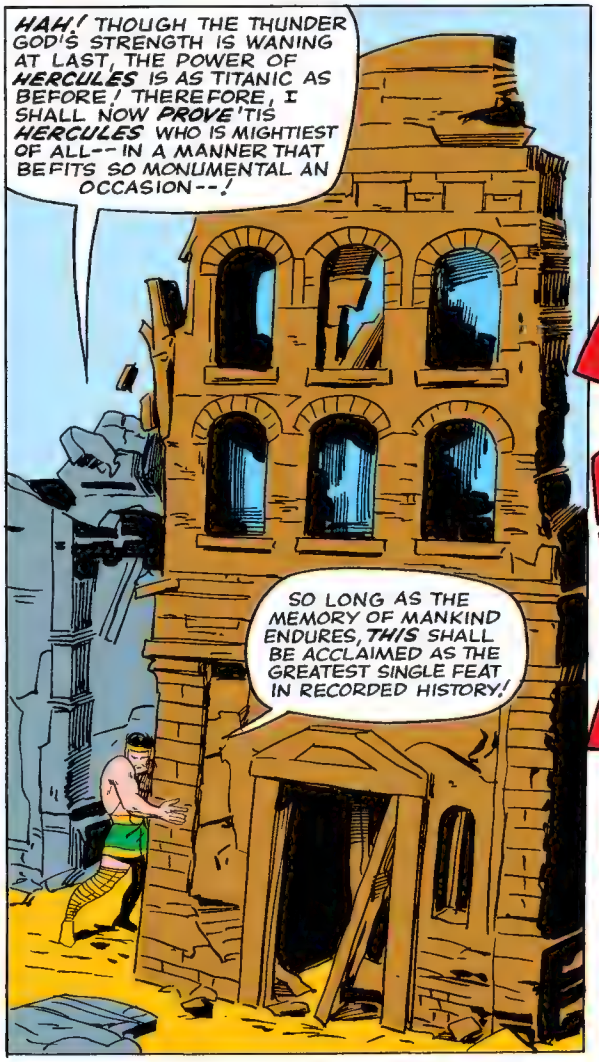

AHH, THE REJOICING--THE BACCHANALIAN REVELING--WHICH SHALL FILL ALL OF OLYMPUS--WHEN IT IS LEARNED THAT HERCULES HATH FELLED THE MIGHTY THOR!
AND, HOW FITTING IT SHALL BE TO ACHIEVE MY GREATEST VICTORY BY MEANS OF AN ANCIENT OLYMPIAN SPORT--
MAYHAP EVEN THOU HAST HEARD OF THE GRECIAN PROWESS AT THROWING THE DISCUS!!
SO FAST DO THE HEAVY FLYING OBJECTS ZOOM THRU THE AIR, THAT EVEN THE SPEED OF THOR IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO SAVE HIM FROM THE BATTERING IMPACT...!
KROOM
AND NOW, WHILST THOU ART STILL IN STATE OF SHOCK--
THE FINAL BLOW SHALL BE STRUCK--AS ONLY THE FABLED FIST OF HERCULES CAN STRIKE IT!
BUT, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--
A STRONGER ARM! A STOUTER HEART! A NOBLER SOUL! AND NONE DOTH HERCULES POSSESS, THOU BLABBERING, BLUSTERING, BOASTFUL BUFFOON!
BY THE CLOVEN HOOVES OF PAN!! WHAT DOTH IT TAKE TO DEFEAT THE SON OF ODIN??!

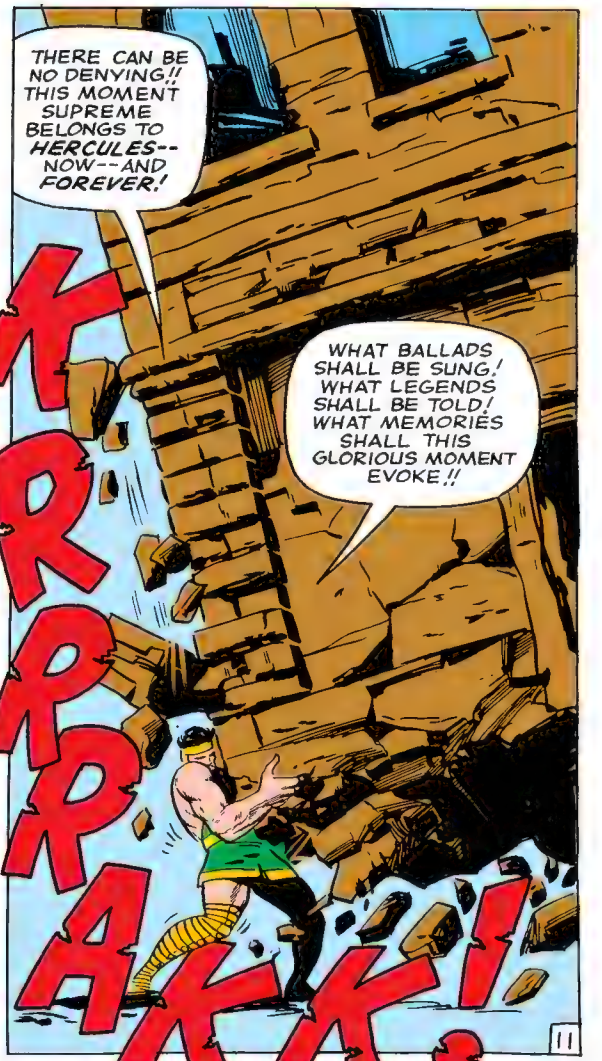

WONDER BEYOND WONDERS!! THOU DOEST HAVE FIRE IN THY VEINS--AS WELL AS THUNDER IN THY FISTS! YEA, 'TIS NOT SOME MEALY-MOUTHED CABBAGE I DO BATTLE WITH! THOU ART AS CAPABLE OF ANGER AS HERCULES HIMSELF!
ANGER...?!? BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN, THOU KNOWEST NOT THE MEANING OF THE WORD! NOT ALL THE FURY IN THE HEAVENS--NOT ALL THE SAVAGERY ON EARTH--CAN EQUAL THE SENSES-SHATTERING CYCLONE OF RAGE WHICH IS THOR, WHEN SEIZED BY A POUNDING PAROXYSM OF WRATH!

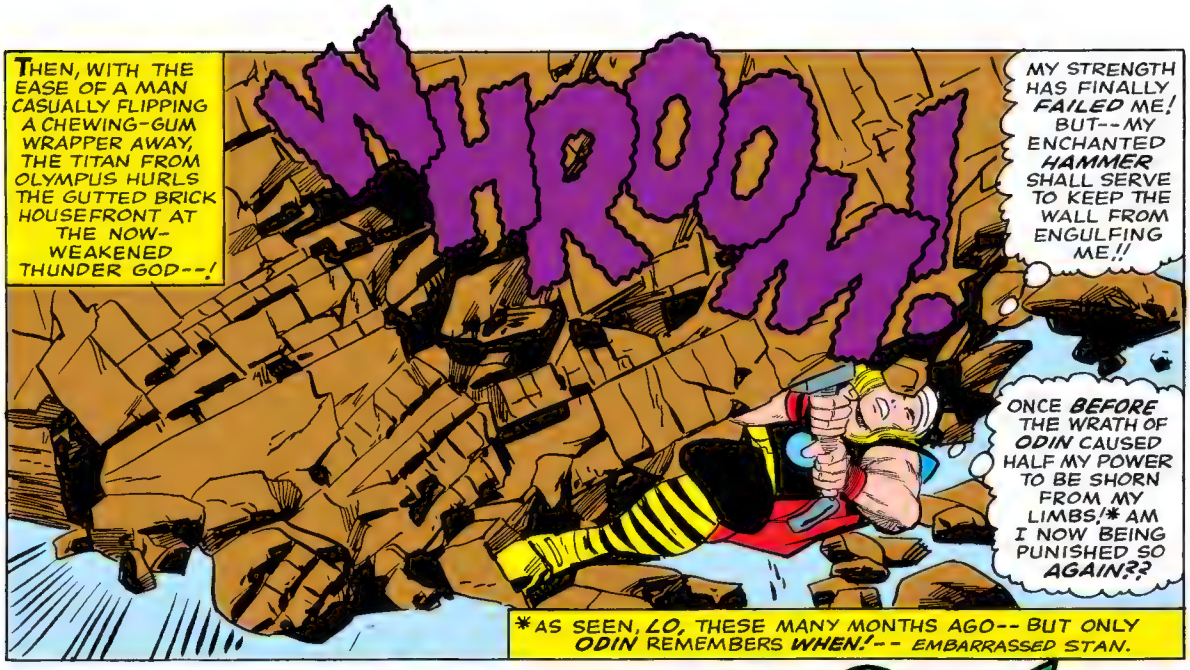
BUT, EVEN AS THE BATTLE RAGES, WE MUST ONCE AGAIN TURN TO HALLOWED ASGARD. FOR IT IS HERE THAT EVENTS ARE BEING SHAPED WHICH WILL HAVE THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT UPON THE THUNDER GOD BELOW---!
BEHOLD, SEIDRING! MY SON DOTH BATTLE LIKE A WARRIOR BORN!
THE PROWESS OF THOR HAS LONG BEEN COMMON KNOWLEDGE, SIRE!
BUT, THOUGH HE BE THE BRAVEST OF ALL WHO LIVE--THOUGH HE BE FLESH OF THY FLESH--HE HATH BROKEN THY LAW--AND MUST BE BROUGHT TO TASK!
WHENE'ER WE SPEAK, I FIND NEW JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE WHO CALL THEE SEIDRING, THE MERCILESS!
YET, THOU RANKEST THE HIGHEST OF ALL MY COUNCIL --AND THY WORDS, THOUGH PAINFUL TO MINE HEART, HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH TO THEM!
THY SORROW IS SEIDRING'S SORROW, SIRE! BUT, JUSTICE IS JUSTICE!
FINALLY, AFTER LONG MOMENTS OF PAINFUL CONTEMPLATION, THE DEEP VOICE OF ODIN SLOWLY FILLS THE CHAMBER...
GIVE EAR TO THE JUDGMENT OF THY LIEGE! I SHALL CAUSE THE POWER OF THOR TO EBB FROM HIS LIMBS--UNTIL IT BE BUT HALF THAT WHICH HE RIGHTFULLY POSSESSES!
BUT, MOST ALL-WISE--IF THOU CAUSE HIM TO LOSE HALF HIS POWER NOW--WHILST HE NEEDS IT MOST, IN BATTLE WITH HERCULES --IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DEATH ITSELF MAY BE HIS FATE!
SILENCE! MY SON IS A GOD! NO LESSER PUNISHMENT WOULD BE SEEMLY! I HAVE SPOKEN!
BUT STILL AM I HIS FATHER! I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO PLACE BLOOD OF MY BLOOD IN THE PATH OF DOOM! I GIVE THE ODIN-POWER TO THEE, SEIDRING--
--POINT THY HAND TOWARD MIDGARD*--AND NOW--RELEASE THY POWER--SO BE IT!
*MIDGARD: THE ASGARDIAN NAME FOR EARTH! --LEGENDARY STAN!

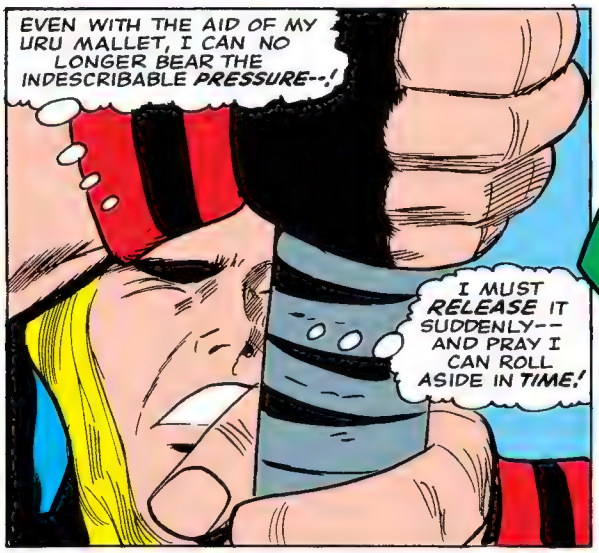

AND, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, AN UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCE AWAY--!
WHAT IS THIS?
THOU, WHO HAST ENDURED MY MIGHTIEST BLOWS--INJURED BY A MERE BOLT OF LIGHT?!?!
UHHHHH--!

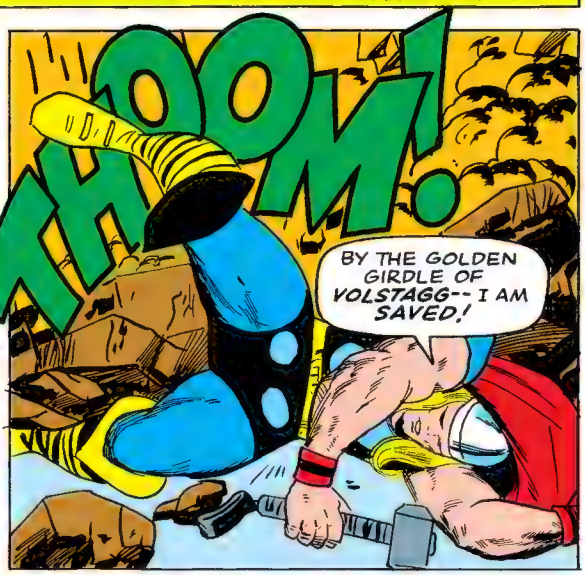

OR, CAN IT BE THAT MY ATTACK HATH FINALLY WEAKENED THEE--AS IT WAS INTENDED TO DO?!!
BOM!
WHAT HAS BEFALLEN ME? FOR THE FIRST TIME, I AM TRULY STAGGERED BY A SINGLE BLOW!

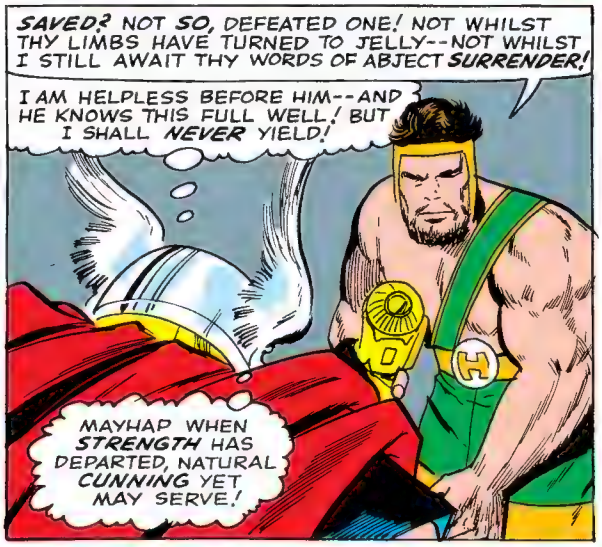

HAH! THOUGH THE THUNDER GOD'S STRENGTH IS WANING AT LAST, THE POWER OF HERCULES IS AS TITANIC AS BEFORE! THEREFORE, I SHALL NOW PROVE 'TIS HERCULES WHO IS MIGHTIEST OF ALL--IN A MANNER THAT BEFITS SO MONUMENTAL AN OCCASION--!
SO LONG AS THE MEMORY OF MANKIND ENDURES, THIS SHALL BE ACCLAIMED AS THE GREATEST SINGLE FEAT IN RECORDED HISTORY!


THERE CAN BE NO DENYING!! THIS MOMENT SUPREME BELONGS TO HERCULES--NOW--AND FOREVER!
WHAT BALLADS SHALL BE SUNG! WHAT LEGENDS SHALL BE TOLD! WHAT MEMORIES SHALL THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT EVOKE!!
KRRRAK!

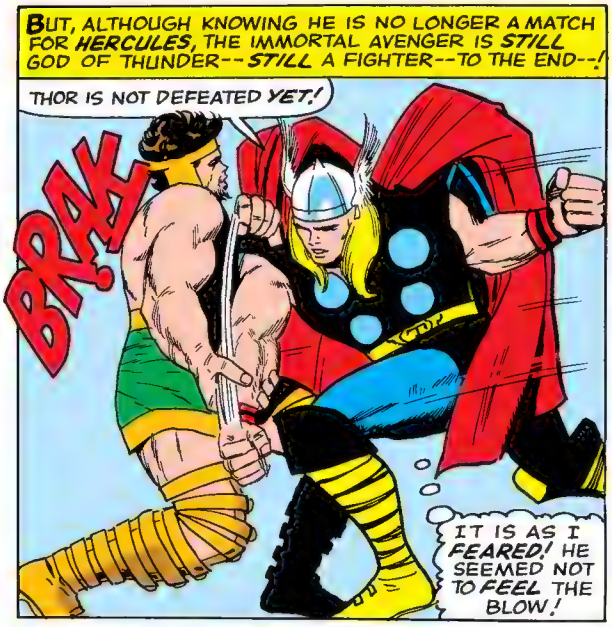

THEN, WITH THE EASE OF A MAN CASUALLY FLIPPING A CHEWING-GUM WRAPPER AWAY, THE TITAN FROM OLYMPUS HURLS THE GUTTED BRICK HOUSEFRONT AT THE NOW-WEAKENED THUNDER GOD--!
WHROOM!
MY STRENGTH HAS FINALLY *FAILED* ME! BUT--MY ENCHANTED *HAMMER* SHALL SERVE TO KEEP THE WALL FROM ENGULFING ME!!
ONCE *BEFORE* THE WRATH OF *ODIN* CAUSED HALF MY POWER TO BE SHORN FROM MY LIMBS,/* AM I NOW BEING PUNISHED SO *AGAIN*??
*AS SEEN, *LO*, THESE MANY MONTHS AGO-- BUT ONLY *ODIN* REMEMBERS *WHEN!*-- EMBARRASSED STAN.

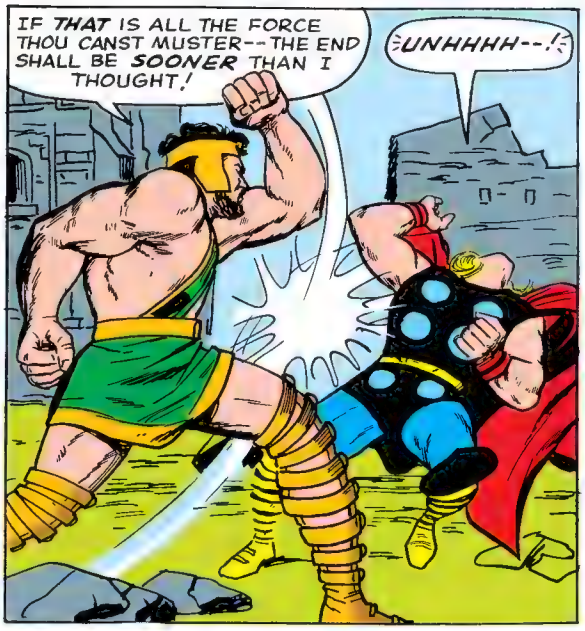

EVEN WITH THE AID OF MY URU MALLET, I CAN NO LONGER BEAR THE INDESCRIBABLE *PRESSURE*--!
I MUST *RELEASE* IT SUDDENLY-- AND PRAY I CAN ROLL ASIDE IN *TIME!*

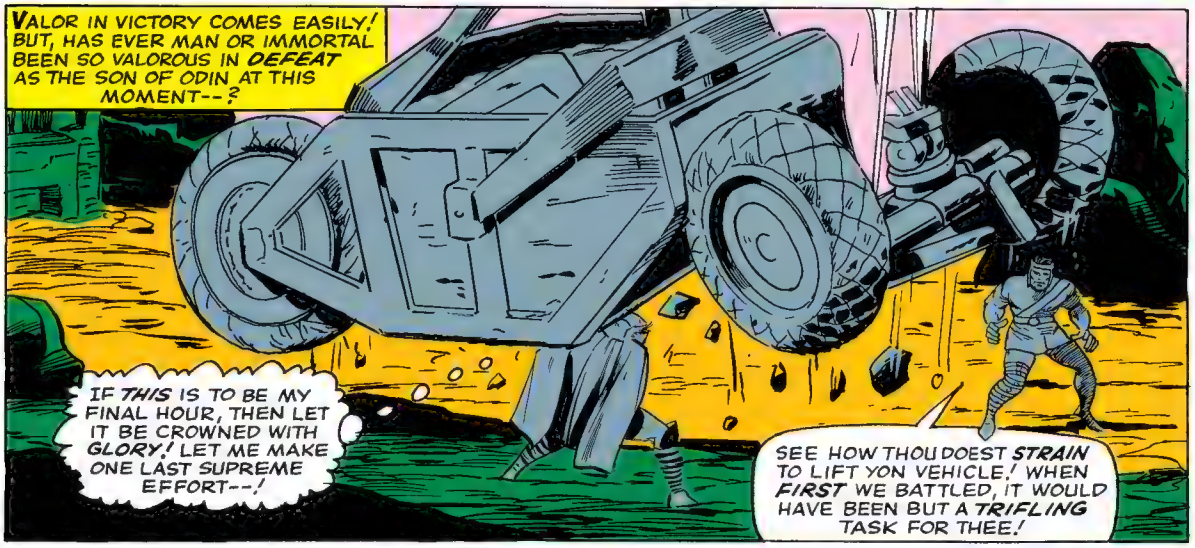

THOOM!
BY THE GOLDEN GIRDLE OF *VOLSTAGG*-- I AM *SAVED!*

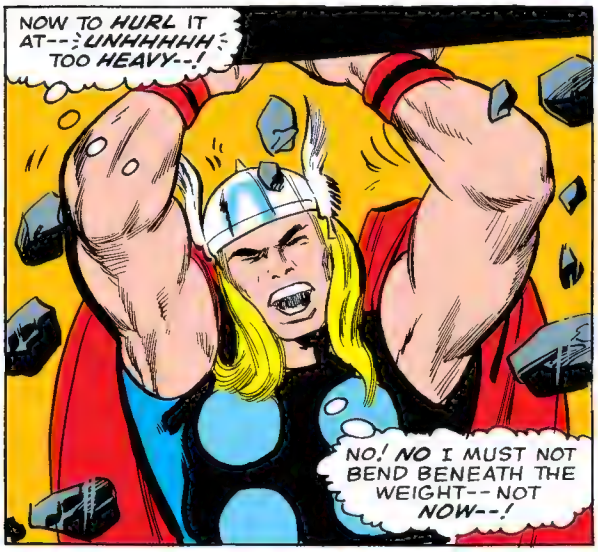

SAVED? NOT *SO*, DEFEATED ONE! NOT WHILST THY LIMBS HAVE TURNED TO JELLY--NOT WHILST I STILL AWAIT THY WORDS OF ABJECT *SURRENDER!*
I AM HELPLESS BEFORE HIM--AND HE KNOWS THIS FULL WELL! BUT I SHALL *NEVER* YIELD!
MAYHAP WHEN *STRENGTH* HAS DEPARTED, NATURAL *CUNNING* YET MAY SERVE!

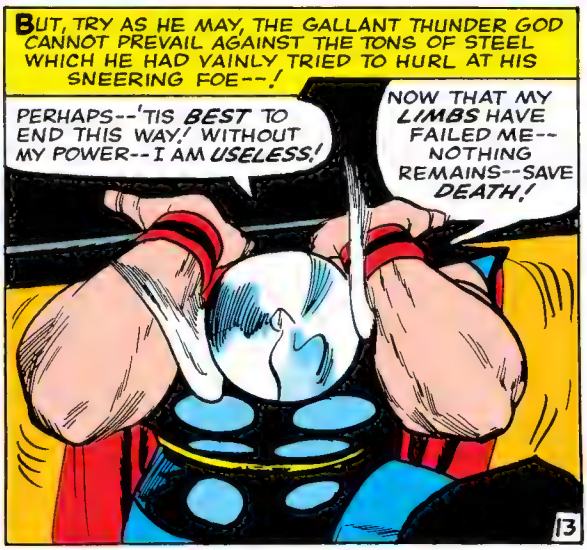
SINCE THY STRENGTH HATH DESERTED THEE, HERCULES' ZEST FOR BATTLE IS GONE! THEREFORE, LET US PUT AN *END* TO THIS FARCE! PREPARE FOR THINE *UNDOING*, PITIFUL ONE!


BUT, ALTHOUGH KNOWING HE IS NO LONGER A MATCH FOR HERCULES, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER IS STILL GOD OF THUNDER--STILL A FIGHTER--TO THE END--!
THOR IS NOT DEFEATED YET!
BRAK
IT IS AS I FEARED! HE SEEMED NOT TO FEEL THE BLOW!

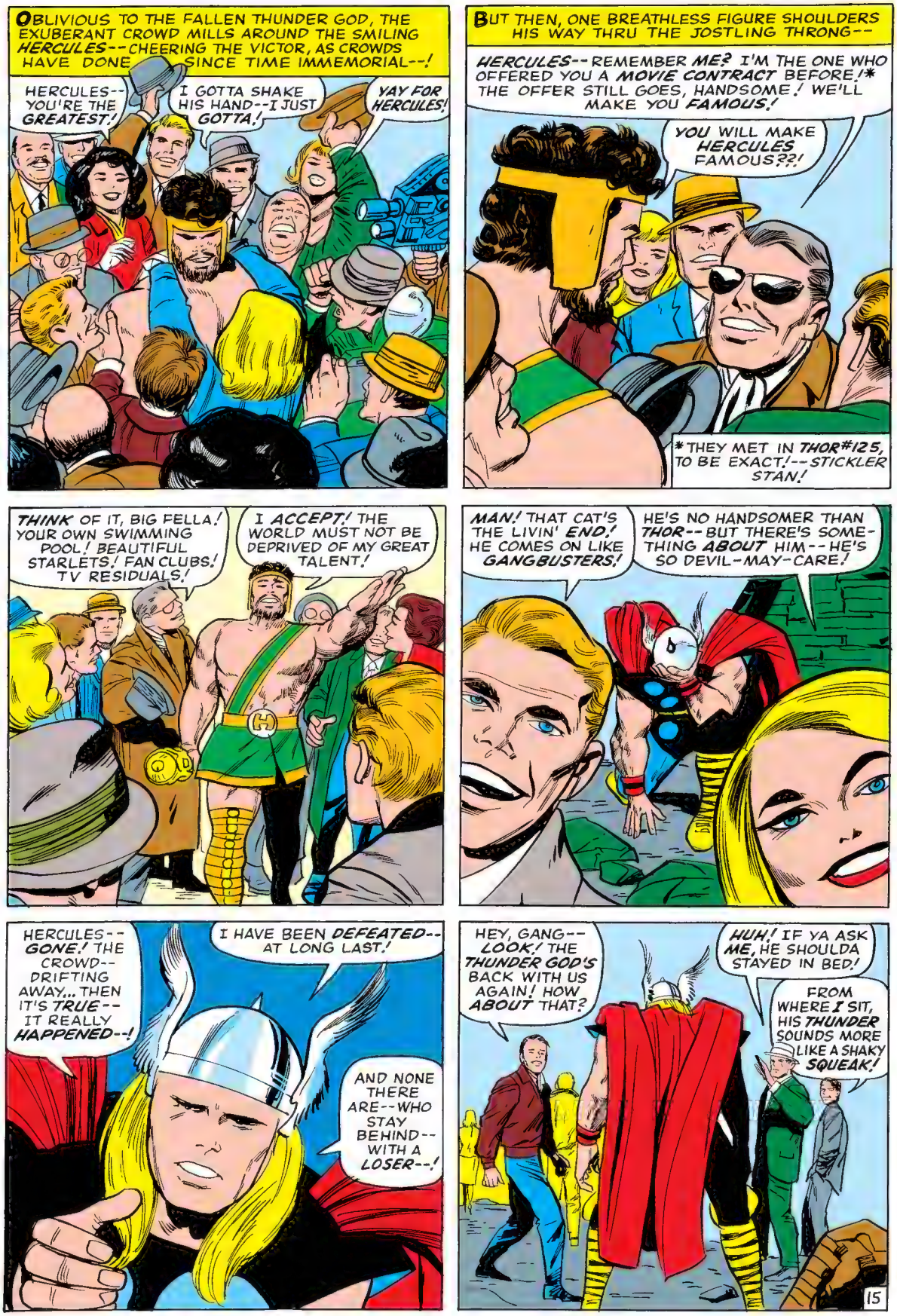

IF THAT IS ALL THE FORCE THOU CANST MUSTER--THE END SHALL BE SOONER THAN I THOUGHT!
UNHHHH--!

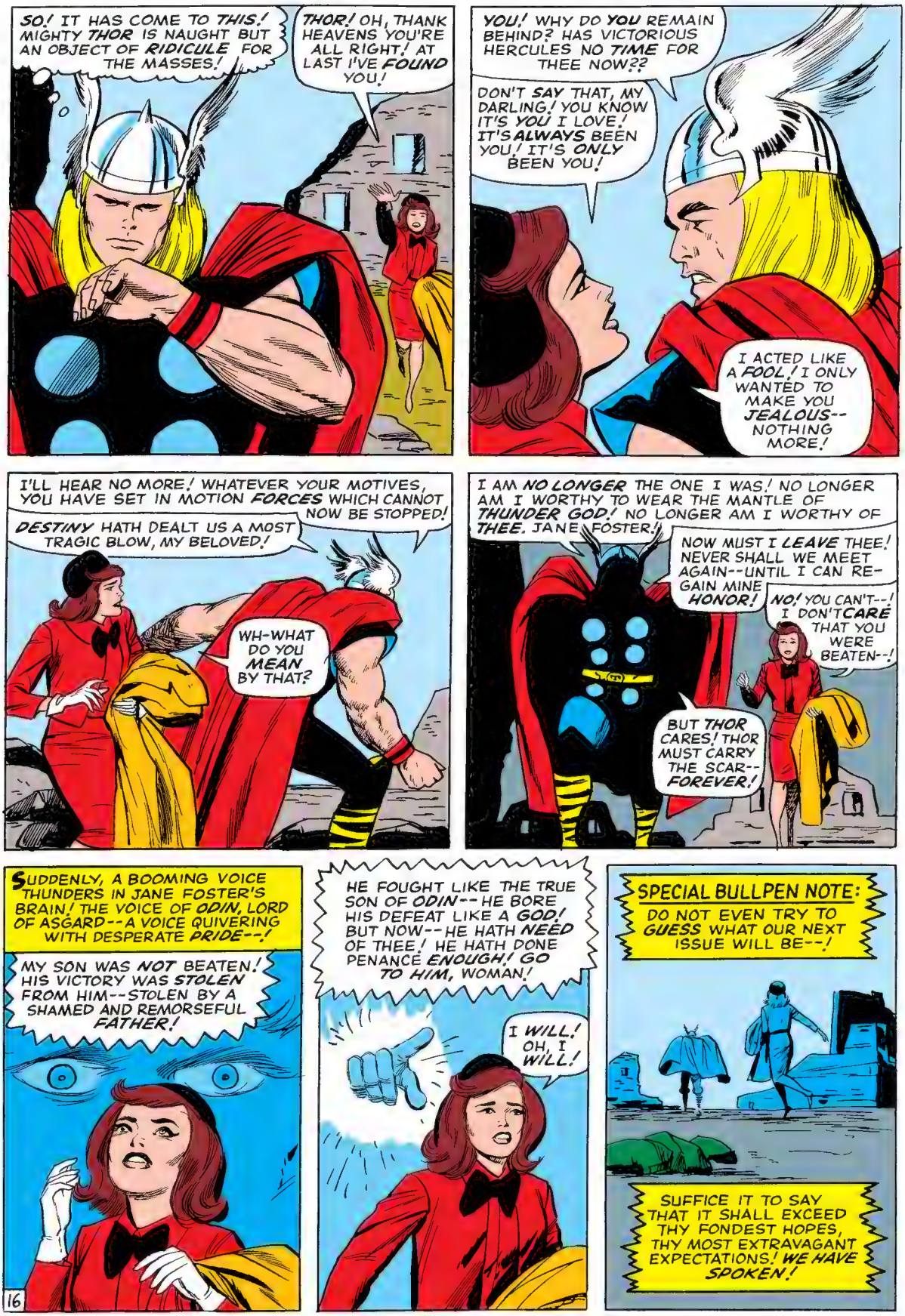

VALOR IN VICTORY COMES EASILY! BUT, HAS EVER MAN OR IMMORTAL BEEN SO VALOROUS IN DEFEAT AS THE SON OF ODIN AT THIS MOMENT--?
IF THIS IS TO BE MY FINAL HOUR, THEN LET IT BE CROWNED WITH GLORY! LET ME MAKE ONE LAST SUPREME EFFORT--!
SEE HOW THOU DOEST STRAIN TO LIFT YON VEHICLE! WHEN FIRST WE BATTLED, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BUT A TRIFLING TASK FOR THEE!

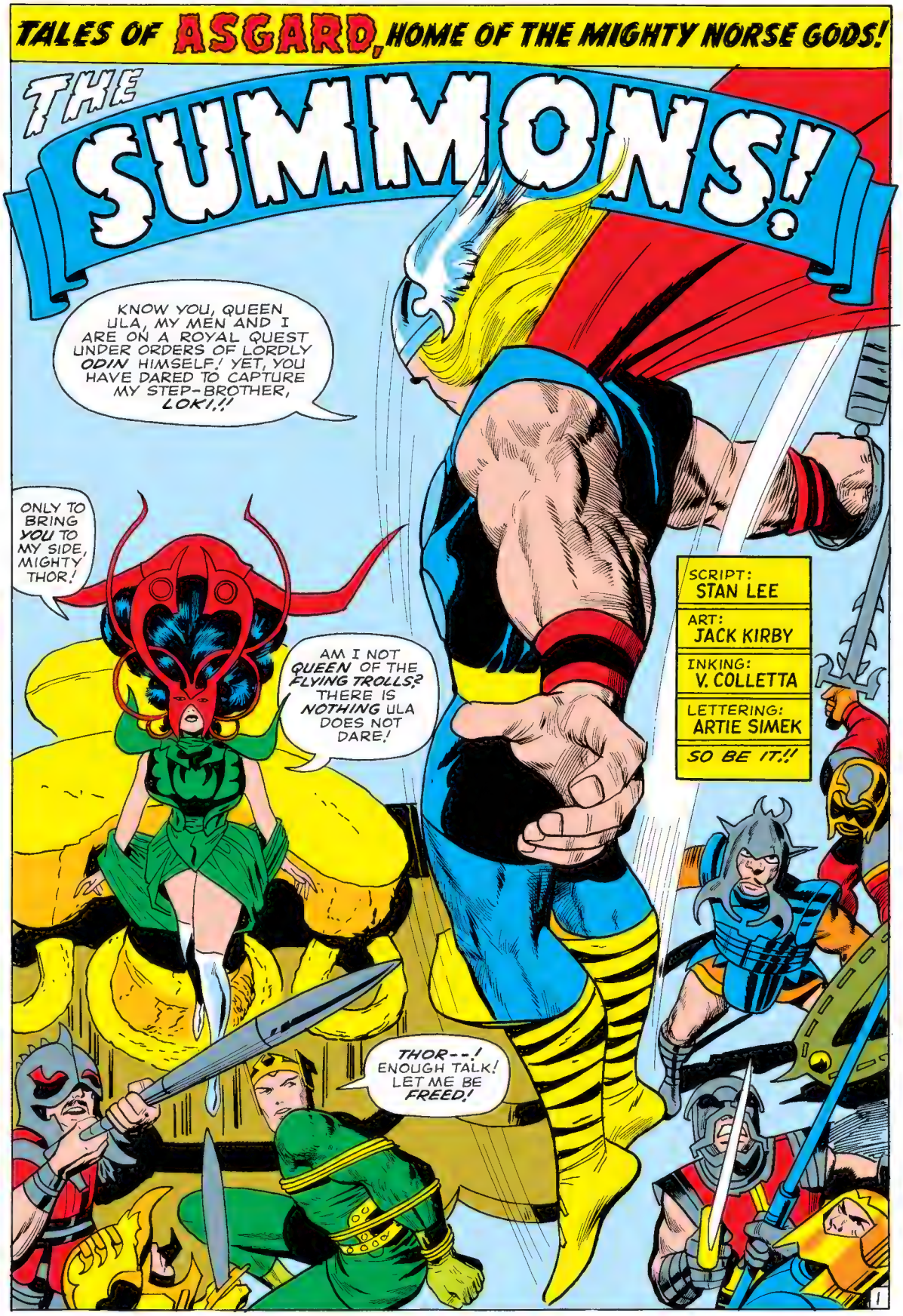

NOW TO HURL IT AT--UNHHHHH--TOO HEAVY--!
NO! NO I MUST NOT BEND BENEATH THE WEIGHT--NOT NOW--!


BUT, TRY AS HE MAY, THE GALLANT THUNDER GOD CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST THE TONS OF STEEL WHICH HE HAD VAINLY TRIED TO HURL AT HIS SNEERING FOE--!
PERHAPS--'TIS BEST TO END THIS WAY! WITHOUT MY POWER--I AM USELESS!
NOW THAT MY LIMBS HAVE FAILED ME--NOTHING REMAINS--SAVE DEATH!

HOLD, GOD OF THUNDER! THOU SHALT NOT SO EASILY DEPRIVE ME OF MY VICTORY!
KRAK!
ON THY FEET, ASGARDIAN! MOUTH THE WORDS I AM WAITING TO HEAR! TELL HERCULES THAT THOR ABJECTLY SURRENDERS! SPEAK, VANQUISHED ONE!
NEVER! NOT WHILE BREATH REMAINS WITHIN ME! NOT WHILE LIFE ENDURES!
STILL THOU FIGHTEST ON?!! STILL THOU STRIKETH AT THY MASTER?!! THOU ART TRULY MAD!
AND THIS THEN SHALL BE THY PAEAN OF DEFEAT!
WHOM!
HE WON! HERCULES BEAT THOR!
WHAT A FIGHT!
SO! THE WORLD HAD BEEN WATCHING! 'TWAS TO HAVE BEEN EXPECTED! AND NOW, THE JACKALS GATHER 'ROUND THE LION!
WOTTA STORY! WHAT PICTURES! IT'LL BE THE GREATEST SENSATION SINCE D-DAY!
FROM NOW ON, THOR'LL BE A HAS-BEEN! THE CHAMP IS DEAD--LONG LIVE THE CHAMP!
14


OBLIVIOUS TO THE FALLEN THUNDER GOD, THE EXUBERANT CROWD MILLS AROUND THE SMILING HERCULES--CHEERING THE VICTOR, AS CROWDS HAVE DONE SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL--!
HERCULES--YOU'RE THE GREATEST!
I GOTTA SHAKE HIS HAND--I JUST GOTTA!
YAY FOR HERCULES!
BUT THEN, ONE BREATHLESS FIGURE SHOULDERS HIS WAY THRU THE JOSTLING THRONG--
HERCULES--REMEMBER ME? I'M THE ONE WHO OFFERED YOU A MOVIE CONTRACT BEFORE!* THE OFFER STILL GOES, HANDSOME! WE'LL MAKE YOU FAMOUS!
YOU WILL MAKE HERCULES FAMOUS??!
*THEY MET IN THOR#125, TO BE EXACT!--STICKLER STAN!
THINK OF IT, BIG FELLA! YOUR OWN SWIMMING POOL! BEAUTIFUL STARLETS! FAN CLUBS! TV RESIDUALS!
I ACCEPT! THE WORLD MUST NOT BE DEPRIVED OF MY GREAT TALENT!
MAN! THAT CAT'S THE LIVIN' END! HE COMES ON LIKE GANGBUSTERS!
HE'S NO HANDSOMER THAN THOR--BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM--HE'S SO DEVIL-MAY-CARE!
HERCULES--GONE! THE CROWD--DRIFTING AWAY... THEN IT'S TRUE--IT REALLY HAPPENED--!
I HAVE BEEN DEFEATED--AT LONG LAST!
AND NONE THERE ARE--WHO STAY BEHIND--WITH A LOSER--!
HEY, GANG--LOOK! THE THUNDER GOD'S BACK WITH US AGAIN! HOW ABOUT THAT?
HUH! IF YA ASK ME, HE SHOULDA STAYED IN BED!
FROM WHERE I SIT, HIS THUNDER SOUNDS MORE LIKE A SHAKY SQUEAK!
15


SO! IT HAS COME TO THIS! MIGHTY THOR IS NAUGHT BUT AN OBJECT OF RIDICULE FOR THE MASSES!
THOR! OH, THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! AT LAST I'VE FOUND YOU!
YOU! WHY DO YOU REMAIN BEHIND? HAS VICTORIOUS HERCULES NO TIME FOR THEE NOW??
DON'T SAY THAT, MY DARLING! YOU KNOW IT'S YOU I LOVE! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU! IT'S ONLY BEEN YOU!
I ACTED LIKE A FOOL! I ONLY WANTED TO MAKE YOU JEALOUS-- NOTHING MORE!
I'LL HEAR NO MORE! WHATEVER YOUR MOTIVES, YOU HAVE SET IN MOTION FORCES WHICH CANNOT NOW BE STOPPED!
DESTINY HATH DEALT US A MOST TRAGIC BLOW, MY BELOVED!
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
I AM NO LONGER THE ONE I WAS! NO LONGER AM I WORTHY TO WEAR THE MANTLE OF THUNDER GOD! NO LONGER AM I WORTHY OF THEE, JANE FOSTER!
NOW MUST I LEAVE THEE! NEVER SHALL WE MEET AGAIN--UNTIL I CAN RE-GAIN MINE HONOR!
NO! YOU CAN'T--! I DON'T CARE THAT YOU WERE BEATEN--!
BUT THOR CARES! THOR MUST CARRY THE SCAR-- FOREVER!
SUDDENLY, A BOOMING VOICE THUNDERS IN JANE FOSTER'S BRAIN! THE VOICE OF ODIN, LORD OF ASGARD--A VOICE QUIVERING WITH DESPERATE PRIDE--!
MY SON WAS NOT BEATEN! HIS VICTORY WAS STOLEN FROM HIM--STOLEN BY A SHAMED AND REMORSEFUL FATHER!
HE FOUGHT LIKE THE TRUE SON OF ODIN--HE BORE HIS DEFEAT LIKE A GOD! BUT NOW--HE HATH NEED OF THEE! HE HATH DONE PENANCE ENOUGH! GO TO HIM, WOMAN!
I WILL! OH, I WILL!
SPECIAL BULLPEN NOTE:
DO NOT EVEN TRY TO GUESS WHAT OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE--!
SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT IT SHALL EXCEED THY FONDEST HOPES, THY MOST EXTRAVAGANT EXPECTATIONS! WE HAVE SPOKEN!
16


TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!
THE SUMMONS!
KNOW YOU, QUEEN ULA, MY MEN AND I ARE ON A ROYAL QUEST UNDER ORDERS OF LORDLY ODIN HIMSELF! YET, YOU HAVE DARED TO CAPTURE MY STEP-BROTHER, LOKI!!
ONLY TO BRING YOU TO MY SIDE, MIGHTY THOR!
AM I NOT QUEEN OF THE FLYING TROLLS? THERE IS NOTHING ULA DOES NOT DARE!
THOR--! ENOUGH TALK! LET ME BE FREED!
SCRIPT: STAN LEE
ART: JACK KIRBY
INKING: V. COLLETTA
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
SO BE IT!!
1

REMEMBER, GOD OF THUNDER, THIS IS THRYHEIM--THIS IS MY DOMAIN! 'TIS I WHO AM THE POWER HERE!
NAY, MY QUEEN! WHERE E'ER A TRUE WARRIOR OF ASGARD TRODS, 'TIS THERE THAT POWER REPOSES, NOW LET LOKI BE UNSHACKLED!

ALL IN GOOD TIME, NOBLE THOR!
THOR! THY NAME HAS THE RING OF MAJESTY TO IT! YOU ARE ALL I KNEW YOU WOULD BE--AND MORE!

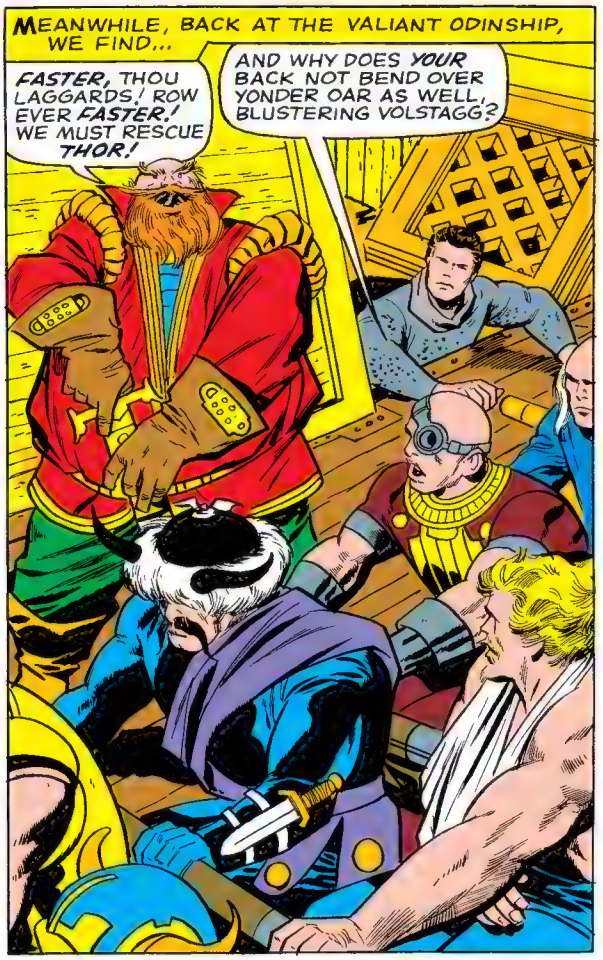
TOO LONG HAVE I RULED HERE ALONE-- A QUEEN WITHOUT A KING!
BUT NOW, AT LAST, I HAVE FOUND THE ONE WITH WHOM I MIGHT SHARE MY THRONE!
IF YOU WISH LOKI TO BE FREED, I SHALL GRANT THAT BOON! MERELY SAY THAT YOU WILL STAY AT MY SIDE--THAT WE WILL RULE TOGETHER!
BUT, DARE TO REFUSE--AND ALL WHO RIDE THE ODINSHIP DIE BEFORE MORNING!

'TIS NO EMPTY THREAT I UTTER! MY WARRIORS ARE AS LIMITLESS AS THE SANDS ON THE SHORE!
YOU CANNOT REFUSE HER, THOR! YOU MUST SACRIFICE YOURSELF, FOR THE GOOD OF THE REST!
SILENCE, BASE LOKI! EVEN AT SUCH A MOMENT, YOU THINK ONLY OF YOURSELF! YOU SHAME THE NAME OF VALOR!

SUDDENLY, SILENTLY--UTTERLY WITHOUT WARNING--A SENSES-SHATTERING BURST OF ANTI-ENERGY FILLS THE AIR--A FLASH WHICH INSTANTLY FELLS THE LEGION OF FLYING TROLLS...
WHAT!

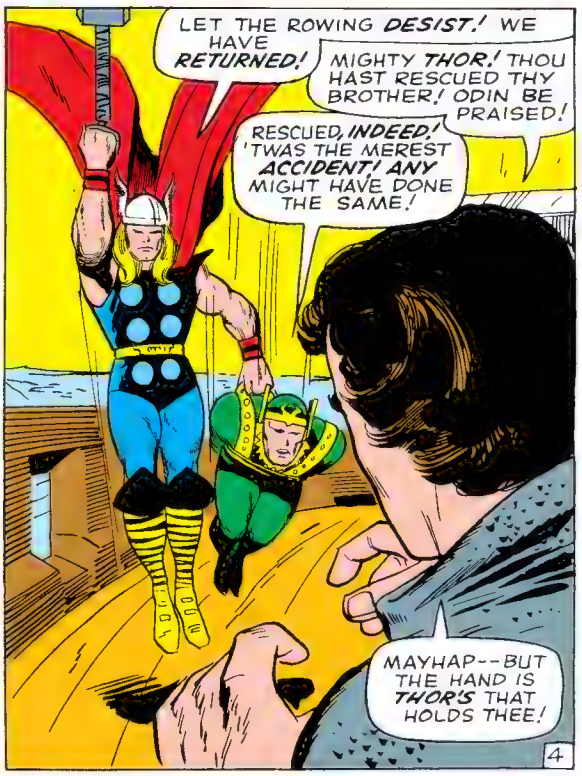
ONLY WE TWO STILL REMAIN CONSCIOUS! WHAT HAS BEFALLEN MUST TRULY BE A SIGN FROM OMNIPOTENT ODIN HIMSELF!
FASTER! FASTER! ONCE AWAY FROM THIS ACCURSED STONE BEEHIVE MY POWER WILL AGAIN RETURN TO ME!

IS THAT ALL THAT CONCERNS YOU, LOKI? DOES NAUGHT BUT THE THOUGHT OF POWER OCCUPY THY MIND?
ALL ELSE IS EMPTY--MEANINGLESS! POWER IS ALL!

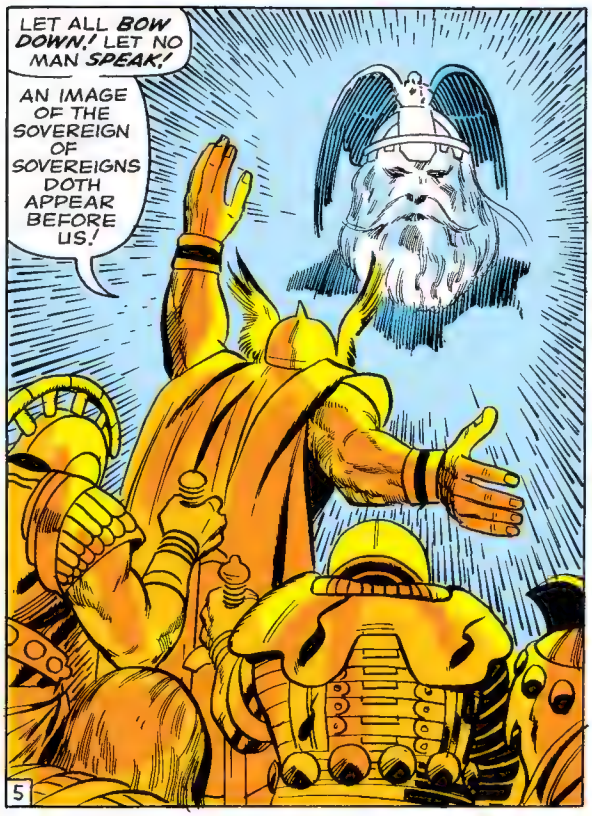

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE VALIANT ODINSHIP, WE FIND...
FASTER, THOU LAGGARDS! ROW EVER FASTER! WE MUST RESCUE THOR!
AND WHY DOES YOUR BACK NOT BEND OVER YONDER OAR AS WELL, BLUSTERING VOLSTAGG?

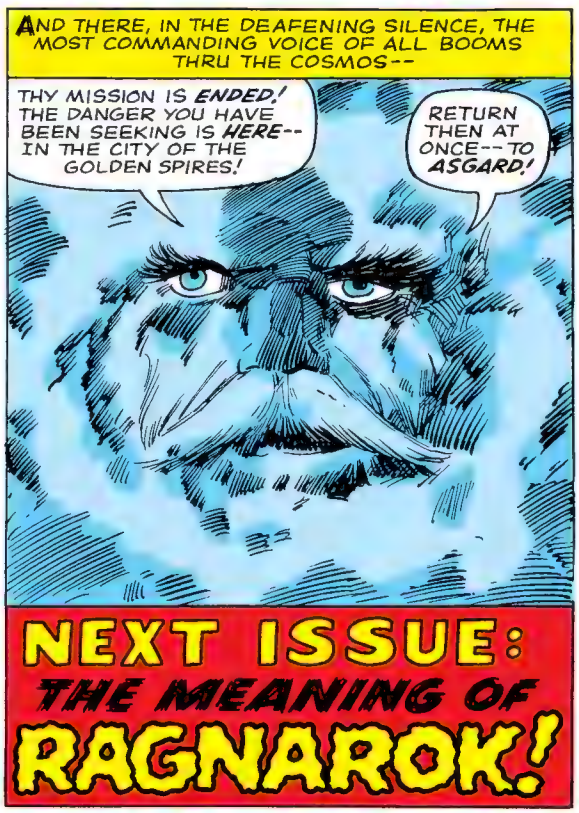
I?? I MUST SAVE MY STRENGTH, KRODA! FOR I SHALL LEAD THE ATTACK UPON THE STONE HIVE!
THINK, THOU WITLESS OAF, HOW ONE BLISTER UPON THIS MIGHTY FINGER COULD LOSE AN ENTIRE BATTLE FOR ASGARD!
DO NOT FEAR, GALLANT VOLSTAGG--WE HAVE BLISTER OINTMENT AMONGST OUR STORES!
THEREFORE, AS ACTING CAPTAIN, IN THE ABSENCE OF THOR, I ORDER THEE TO ROW WITH THE OTHERS!

WILLINGLY DO I OBEY, LOYAL BALDER!
BUT, 'TIS TRULY A PITY THAT SUCH SEATS ARE BUILT FOR FAR LESSER MEN THAN MOUNTAINOUS VOLSTAGG!
HAVE A CARE, ENORMOUS ONE, LEST THOU JOSTLE HALF OUR CREW INTO THE SEA!
BUMBLING BUFFOON! THERE IS NO ROOM HERE FOR THEE!


LET THE ROWING DESIST! WE HAVE RETURNED!
MIGHTY THOR! THOU HAST RESCUED THY BROTHER! ODIN BE PRAISED!
RESCUED, INDEED! 'TWAS THE MEREST ACCIDENT! ANY MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME!
MAYHAP--BUT THE HAND IS THOR'S THAT HOLDS THEE!

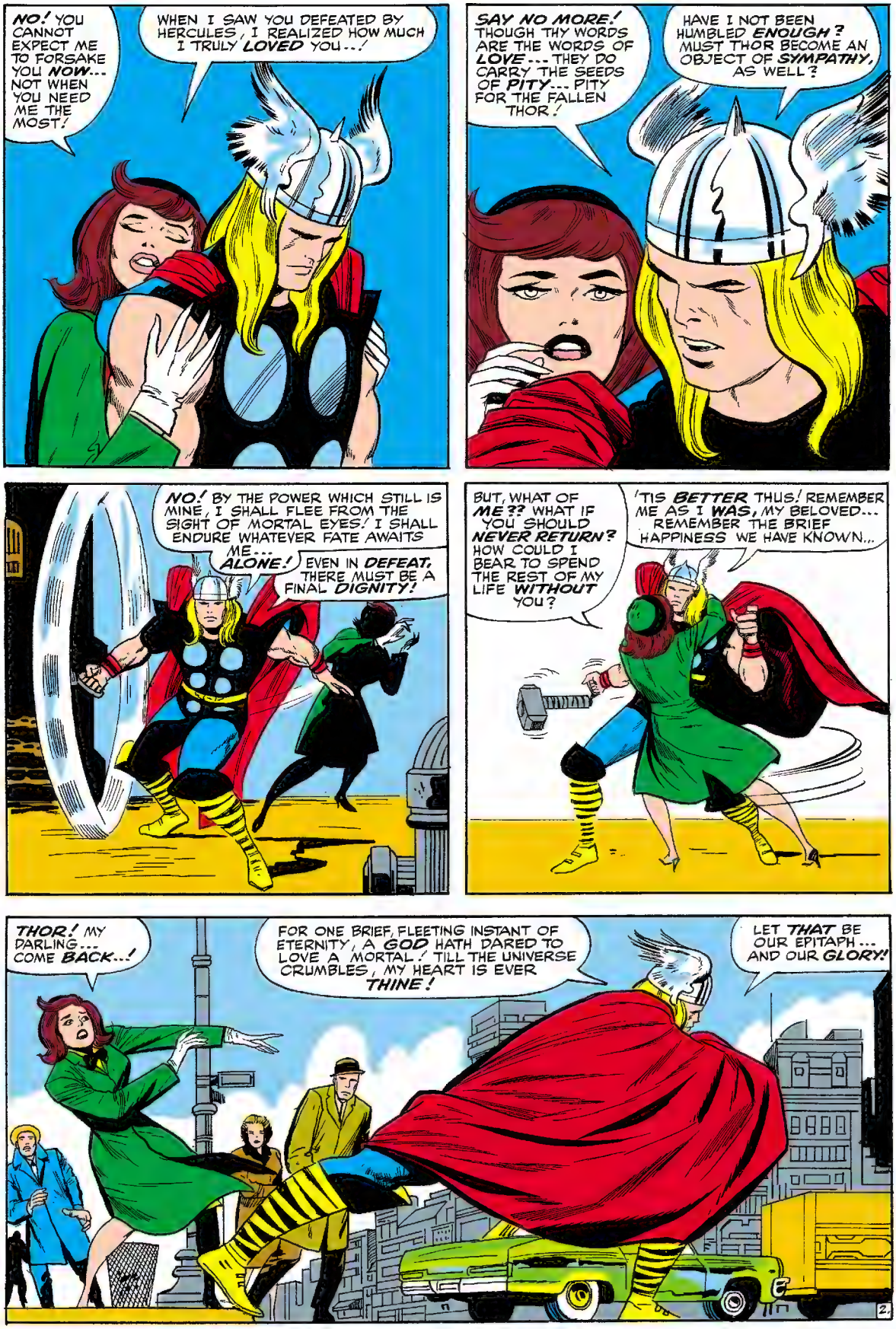
VOLSTAGG WAS BUT MOMENTS BEHIND THEE, THOR! HAD YOU NOT RESCUED LOKI, THE FLYING TROLLS WOULD HAVE ANSWERED TO ME! I WOULD HAVE CRUSHED THEM LIKE FLEAS!
ODS BLOOD, BELLOWING ONE--IN TRUTH, THOU MIGHT HAVE TALKED THEM TO DEATH!
NONE BUT ODIN, THE ALL-WISE, COULD HAVE SAVED US!
FOR ONCE MY BROTHER SPEAKS THE TRUTH! ODIN DID IT FOR ME! THE LIFE OF LOKI IS TOO PRECIOUS TO BE PLACED IN JEOPARDY!

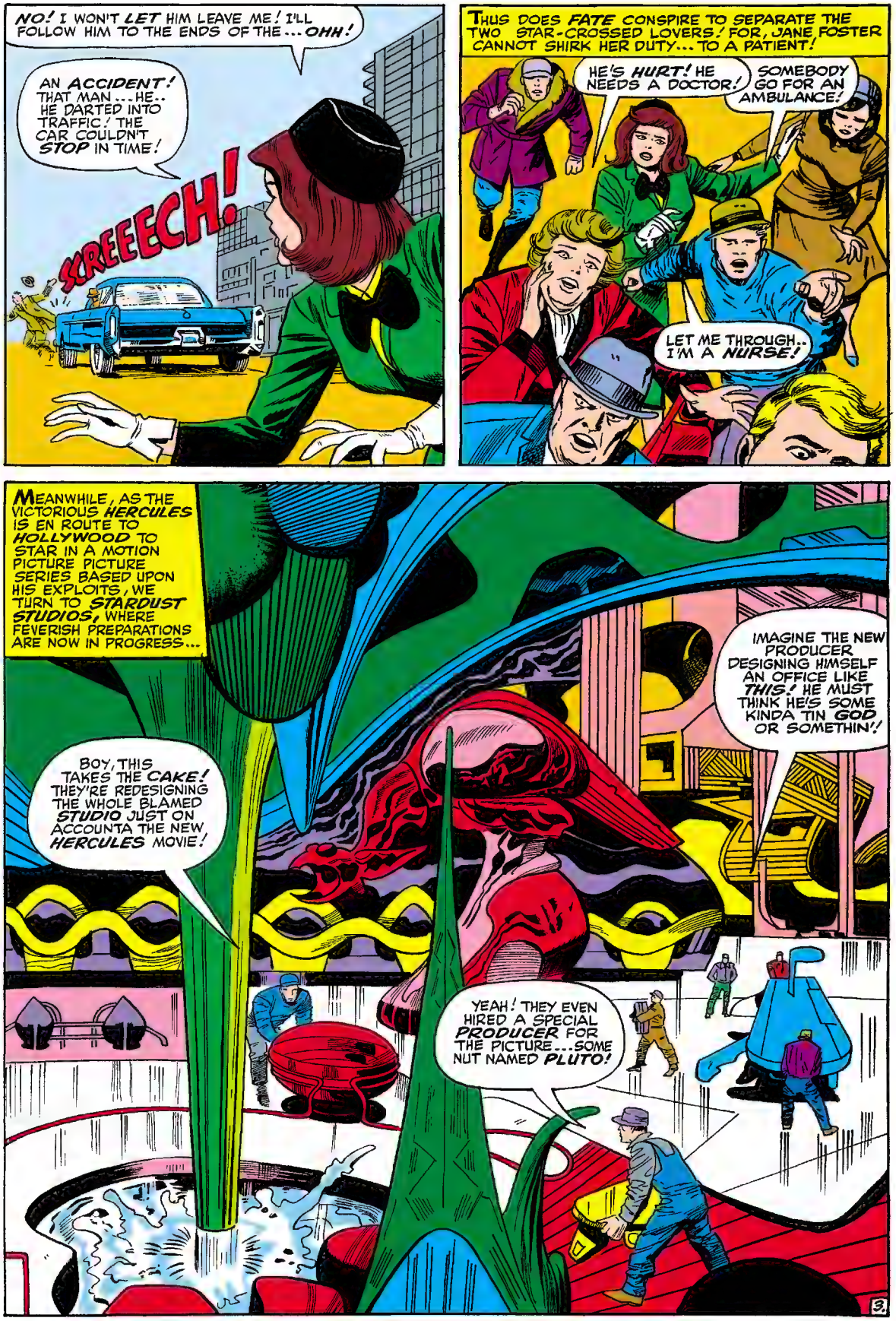

LET ALL BOW DOWN! LET NO MAN SPEAK!
AN IMAGE OF THE SOVEREIGN OF SOVEREIGNS DOTH APPEAR BEFORE US!

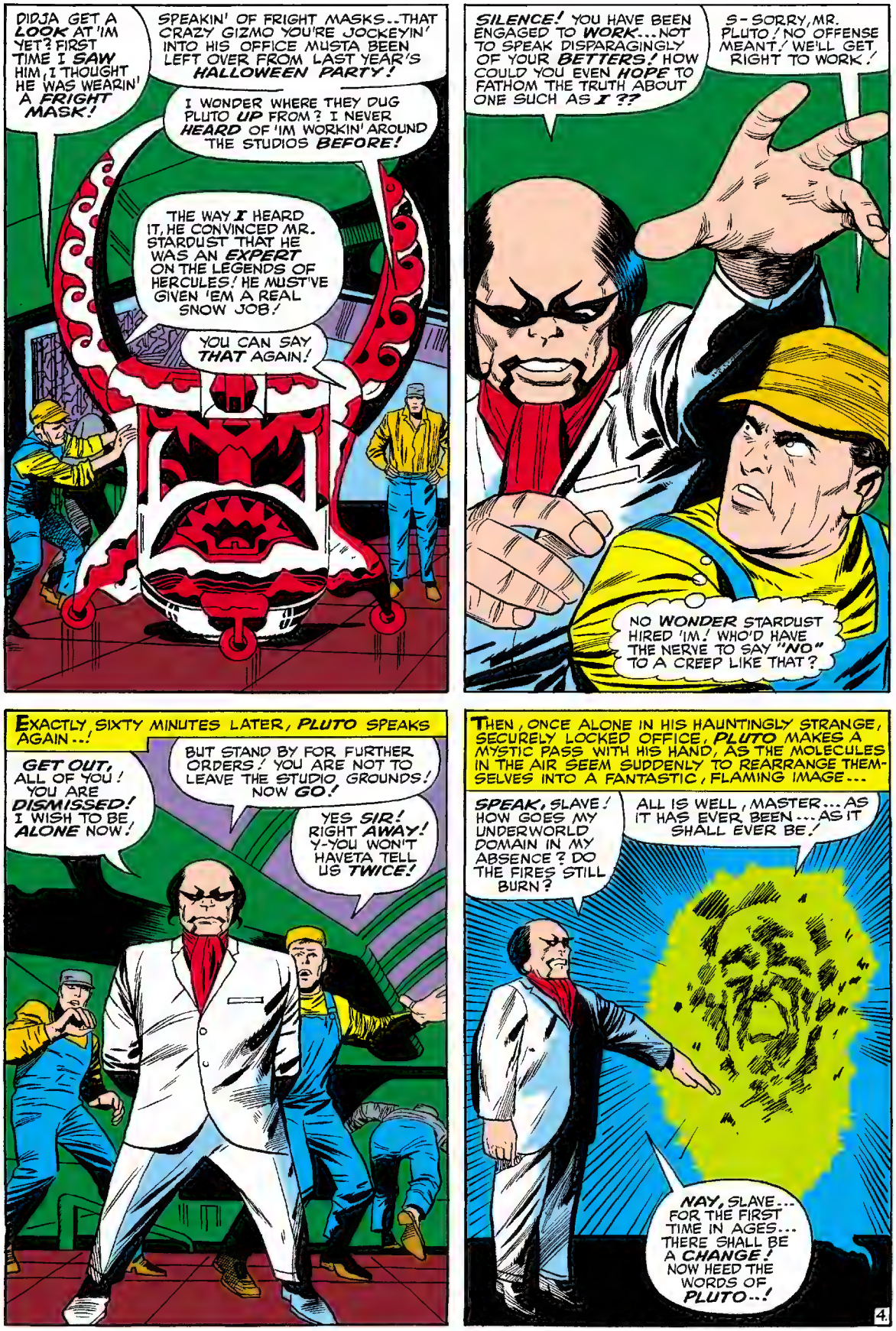

AND THERE, IN THE DEAFENING SILENCE, THE MOST COMMANDING VOICE OF ALL BOOMS THRU THE COSMOS--
THY MISSION IS ENDED! THE DANGER YOU HAVE BEEN SEEKING IS HERE--IN THE CITY OF THE GOLDEN SPIRES!
RETURN THEN AT ONCE--TO ASGARD!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE MEANING OF
RAGNAROK!

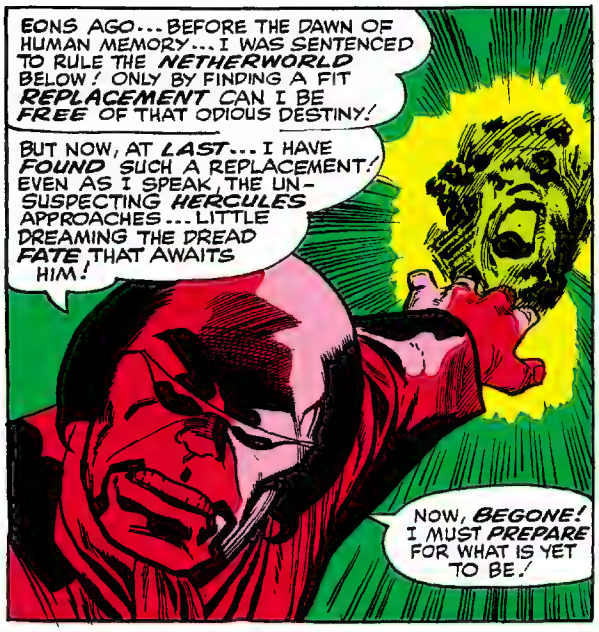
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
127 APR
12¢ IND.
"The HAMMER And The HOLOCAUST!"

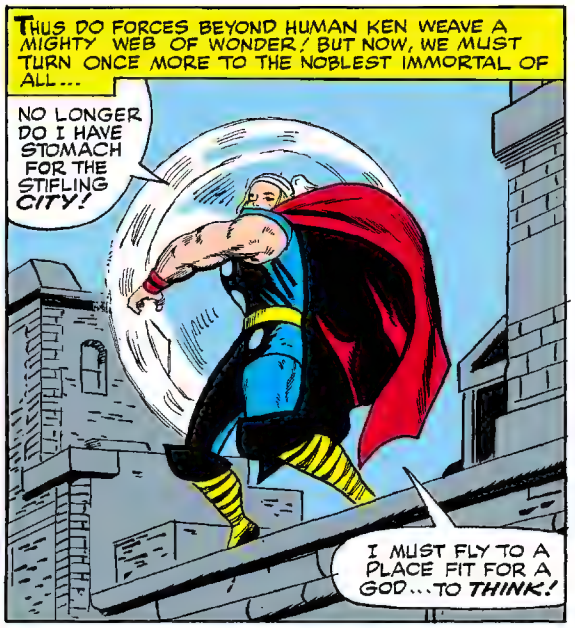
THE MIGHTY THOR!
"THE HAMMER AND THE HOLOCAUST!"
THOR... WAIT! EVEN THOUGH HERCULES HAS DEFEATED YOU IN BATTLE... NOTHING HAS CHANGED BETWEEN US!
I.. I LOVE YOU AS MUCH AS EVER, MY DARLING...!
BEGONE, JANE FOSTER...!
YOU NO LONGER SPEAK TO MIGHTY THOR! INSTEAD, YOU SEE BEFORE YOU A HOLLOW MOCKERY OF HIM WHO HAD BEEN GOD OF THUNDER!
AS PUNISHMENT FOR MY RASH DEFIANCE OF HIS WILL, MY FATHER HATH STRIPPED ME OF HALF MY POWER! I KNOW NOT WHAT FURTHER INDIGNITY MAY AWAIT ME!
BUT, THE GUILT WAS MINE ALONE! SO MUST THE PENANCE BE MINE! NONE SHALL SHARE IT WITH ME!
POSSIBLY THE MOST MAGNIFICENT CHRONICLE OF THOR EVER PRESENTED, BY...
STAN LEE, WRITER
JACK KIRBY, ARTIST
VINCE COLLETTA, DELINEATOR
SAM ROSEN, LETTERER

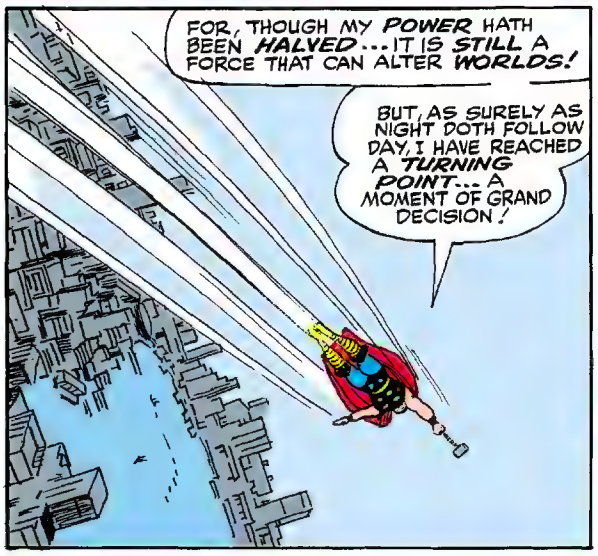

NO! YOU CANNOT EXPECT ME TO FORSAKE YOU NOW... NOT WHEN YOU NEED ME THE MOST!
WHEN I SAW YOU DEFEATED BY HERCULES, I REALIZED HOW MUCH I TRULY LOVED YOU...!
SAY NO MORE! THOUGH THY WORDS ARE THE WORDS OF LOVE... THEY DO CARRY THE SEEDS OF PITY... PITY FOR THE FALLEN THOR!
HAVE I NOT BEEN HUMBLED ENOUGH? MUST THOR BECOME AN OBJECT OF SYMPATHY, AS WELL?
NO! BY THE POWER WHICH STILL IS MINE, I SHALL FLEE FROM THE SIGHT OF MORTAL EYES! I SHALL ENDURE WHATEVER FATE AWAITS ME... ALONE!
EVEN IN DEFEAT, THERE MUST BE A FINAL DIGNITY!
BUT, WHAT OF ME?? WHAT IF YOU SHOULD NEVER RETURN? HOW COULD I BEAR TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WITHOUT YOU?
'TIS BETTER THUS! REMEMBER ME AS I WAS, MY BELOVED... REMEMBER THE BRIEF HAPPINESS WE HAVE KNOWN...
THOR! MY DARLING... COME BACK...!
FOR ONE BRIEF, FLEETING INSTANT OF ETERNITY, A GOD HATH DARED TO LOVE A MORTAL! TILL THE UNIVERSE CRUMBLES, MY HEART IS EVER THINE!
LET THAT BE OUR EPITAPH... AND OUR GLORY!
2.

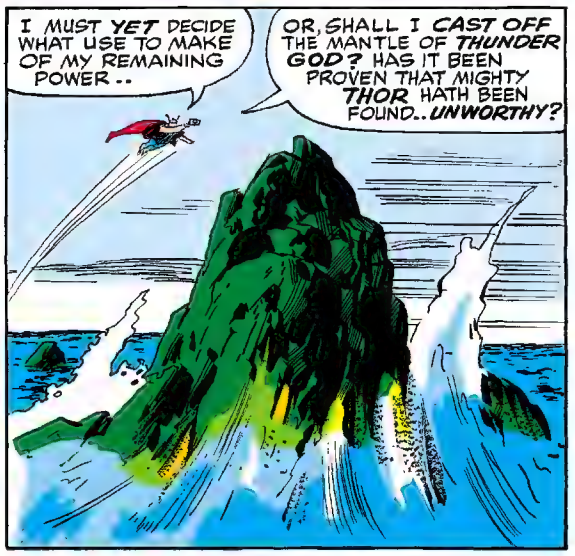

NO! I WON'T LET HIM LEAVE ME! I'LL FOLLOW HIM TO THE ENDS OF THE... OHH!
AN ACCIDENT! THAT MAN... HE.. HE DARTED INTO TRAFFIC! THE CAR COULDN'T STOP IN TIME!
SCREEECH!
THUS DOES FATE CONSPIRE TO SEPARATE THE TWO STAR-CROSSED LOVERS! FOR, JANE FOSTER CANNOT SHIRK HER DUTY... TO A PATIENT!
HE'S HURT! HE NEEDS A DOCTOR!
SOMEBODY GO FOR AN AMBULANCE!
LET ME THROUGH.. I'M A NURSE!
MEANWHILE, AS THE VICTORIOUS HERCULES IS EN ROUTE TO HOLLYWOOD TO STAR IN A MOTION PICTURE PICTURE SERIES BASED UPON HIS EXPLOITS, WE TURN TO STARDUST STUDIOS, WHERE FEVERISH PREPARATIONS ARE NOW IN PROGRESS...
IMAGINE THE NEW PRODUCER DESIGNING HIMSELF AN OFFICE LIKE THIS! HE MUST THINK HE'S SOME KINDA TIN GOD OR SOMETHIN'!
BOY, THIS TAKES THE CAKE! THEY'RE REDESIGNING THE WHOLE BLAMED STUDIO JUST ON ACCOUNTA THE NEW HERCULES MOVIE!
YEAH! THEY EVEN HIRED A SPECIAL PRODUCER FOR THE PICTURE... SOME NUT NAMED PLUTO!
3.

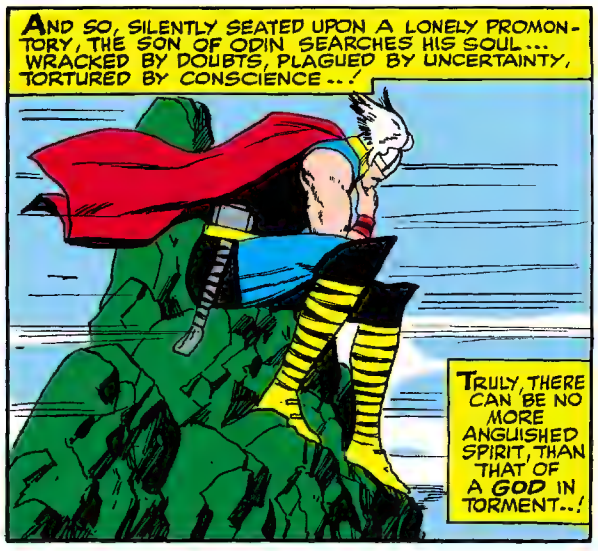

DIDJA GET A LOOK AT 'IM YET? FIRST TIME I SAW HIM, I THOUGHT HE WAS WEARIN' A FRIGHT MASK!
SPEAKIN' OF FRIGHT MASKS--THAT CRAZY GIZMO YOU'RE JOCKEYIN' INTO HIS OFFICE MUSTA BEEN LEFT OVER FROM LAST YEAR'S HALLOWEEN PARTY!
I WONDER WHERE THEY DUG PLUTO UP FROM? I NEVER HEARD OF 'IM WORKIN' AROUND THE STUDIOS BEFORE!
THE WAY I HEARD IT, HE CONVINCED MR. STARDUST THAT HE WAS AN EXPERT ON THE LEGENDS OF HERCULES! HE MUST'VE GIVEN 'EM A REAL SNOW JOB!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!
SILENCE! YOU HAVE BEEN ENGAGED TO WORK... NOT TO SPEAK DISPARAGINGLY OF YOUR BETTERS! HOW COULD YOU EVEN HOPE TO FATHOM THE TRUTH ABOUT ONE SUCH AS I??
S-SORRY, MR. PLUTO! NO OFFENSE MEANT! WE'LL GET RIGHT TO WORK!
NO WONDER STARDUST HIRED 'IM! WHO'D HAVE THE NERVE TO SAY "NO" TO A CREEP LIKE THAT?
EXACTLY, SIXTY MINUTES LATER, PLUTO SPEAKS AGAIN...!
GET OUT, ALL OF YOU! YOU ARE DISMISSED! I WISH TO BE ALONE NOW!
BUT STAND BY FOR FURTHER ORDERS! YOU ARE NOT TO LEAVE THE STUDIO GROUNDS! NOW GO!
YES SIR! RIGHT AWAY! Y-YOU WON'T HAVETA TELL US TWICE!
THEN, ONCE ALONE IN HIS HAUNTINGLY STRANGE, SECURELY LOCKED OFFICE, PLUTO MAKES A MYSTIC PASS WITH HIS HAND, AS THE MOLECULES IN THE AIR SEEM SUDDENLY TO REARRANGE THEMSELVES INTO A FANTASTIC, FLAMING IMAGE...
SPEAK, SLAVE! HOW GOES MY UNDERWORLD DOMAIN IN MY ABSENCE? DO THE FIRES STILL BURN?
ALL IS WELL, MASTER... AS IT HAS EVER BEEN... AS IT SHALL EVER BE!
NAY, SLAVE... FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES... THERE SHALL BE A CHANGE! NOW HEED THE WORDS OF PLUTO...!
4.

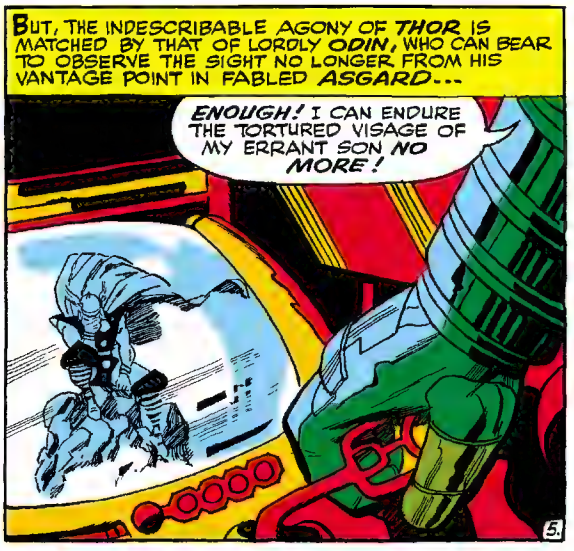

EONS AGO... BEFORE THE DAWN OF HUMAN MEMORY... I WAS SENTENCED TO RULE THE NETHERWORLD BELOW! ONLY BY FINDING A FIT REPLACEMENT CAN I BE FREE OF THAT ODIOUS DESTINY!
BUT NOW, AT LAST... I HAVE FOUND SUCH A REPLACEMENT! EVEN AS I SPEAK, THE UNSUSPECTING HERCULES APPROACHES... LITTLE DREAMING THE DREAD FATE THAT AWAITS HIM!
NOW, BEGONE! I MUST PREPARE FOR WHAT IS YET TO BE!

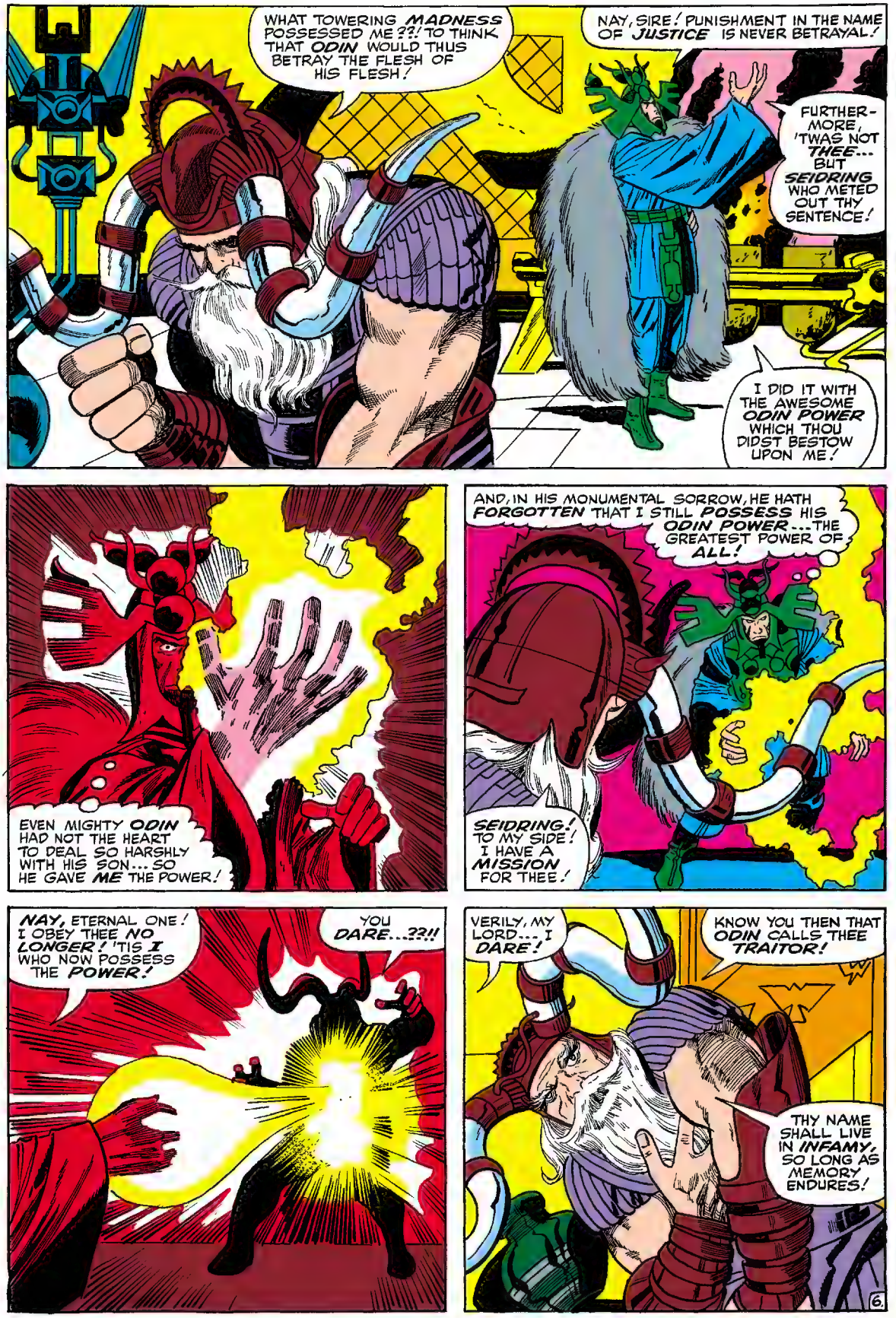

THUS DO FORCES BEYOND HUMAN KEN WEAVE A MIGHTY WEB OF WONDER! BUT NOW, WE MUST TURN ONCE MORE TO THE NOBLEST IMMORTAL OF ALL...
NO LONGER DO I HAVE STOMACH FOR THE STIFLING CITY!
I MUST FLY TO A PLACE FIT FOR A GOD... TO THINK!

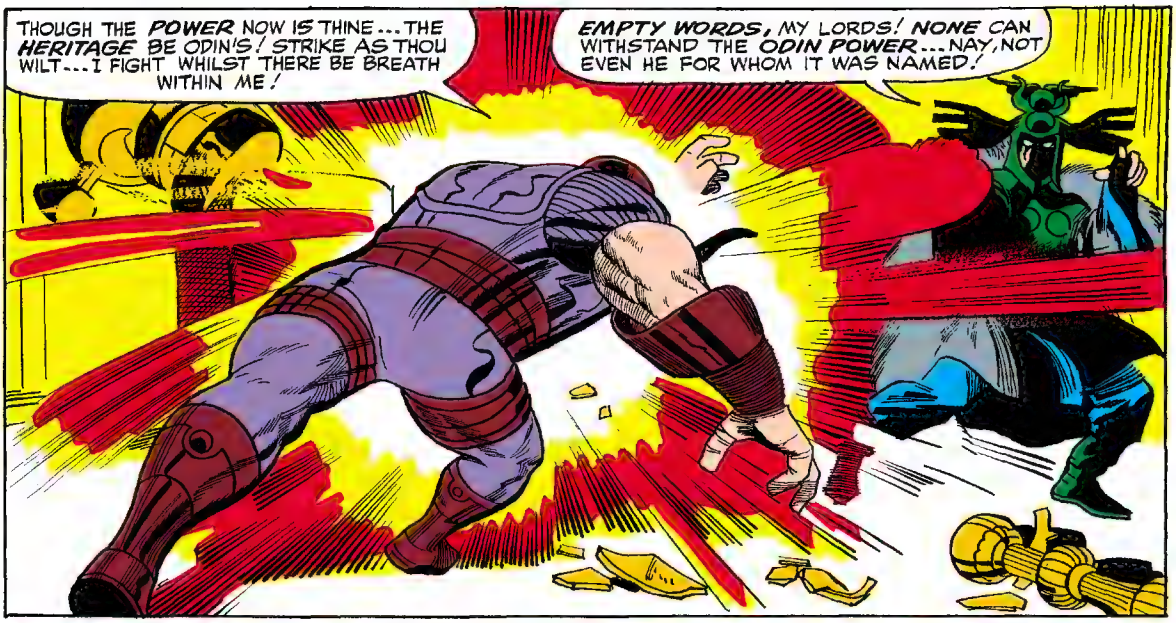

FOR, THOUGH MY POWER HATH BEEN HALVED... IT IS STILL A FORCE THAT CAN ALTER WORLDS!
BUT, AS SURELY AS NIGHT DOTH FOLLOW DAY, I HAVE REACHED A TURNING POINT... A MOMENT OF GRAND DECISION!

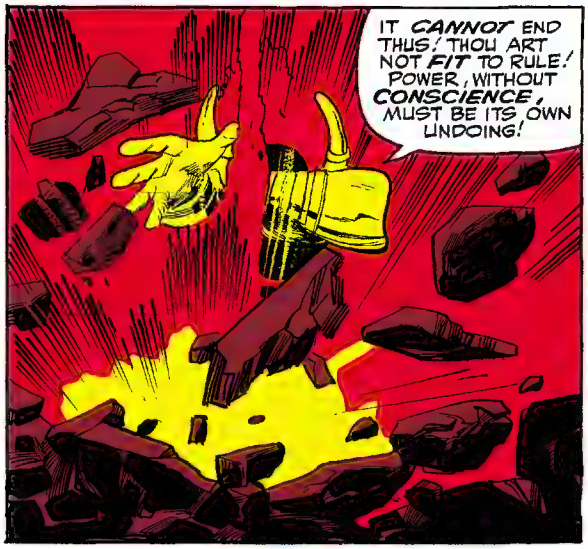

I MUST YET DECIDE WHAT USE TO MAKE OF MY REMAINING POWER..
OR, SHALL I CAST OFF THE MANTLE OF THUNDER GOD? HAS IT BEEN PROVEN THAT MIGHTY THOR HATH BEEN FOUND.. UNWORTHY?

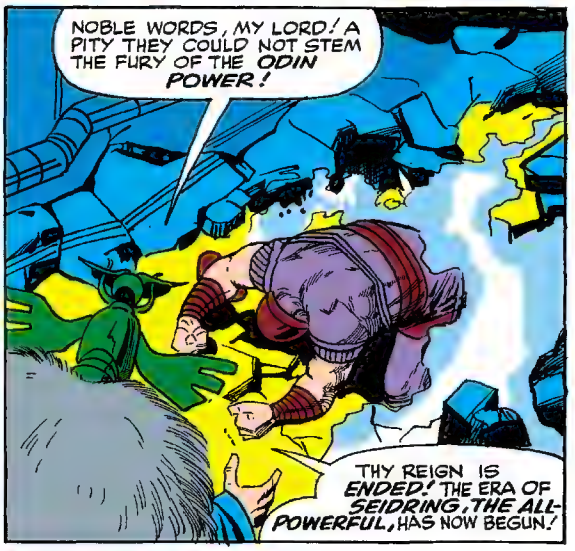

AND SO, SILENTLY SEATED UPON A LONELY PROMONTORY, THE SON OF ODIN SEARCHES HIS SOUL... WRACKED BY DOUBTS, PLAGUED BY UNCERTAINTY, TORTURED BY CONSCIENCE..!
TRULY, THERE CAN BE NO MORE ANGUISHED SPIRIT, THAN THAT OF A GOD IN TORMENT..!

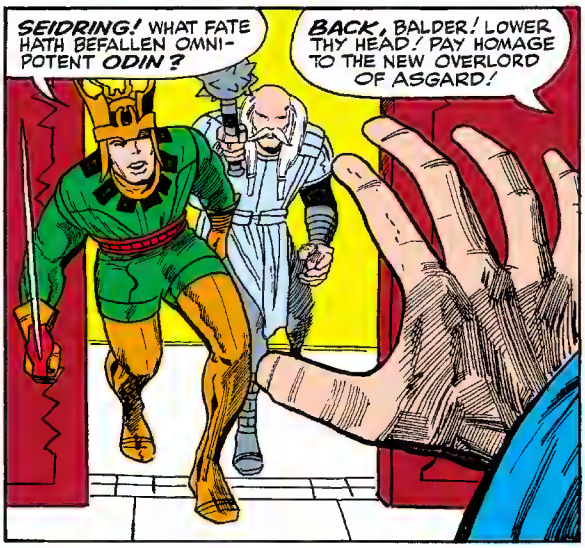

BUT, THE INDESCRIBABLE AGONY OF THOR IS MATCHED BY THAT OF LORDLY ODIN, WHO CAN BEAR TO OBSERVE THE SIGHT NO LONGER FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT IN FABLED ASGARD...
ENOUGH! I CAN ENDURE THE TORTURED VISAGE OF MY ERRANT SON NO MORE!


WHAT TOWERING MADNESS POSSESSED ME??! TO THINK THAT ODIN WOULD THUS BETRAY THE FLESH OF HIS FLESH!
NAY, SIRE! PUNISHMENT IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE IS NEVER BETRAYAL!
FURTHER-MORE, 'TWAS NOT THEE... BUT SEIDRING WHO METED OUT THY SENTENCE!
I DID IT WITH THE AWESOME ODIN POWER WHICH THOU DIDST BESTOW UPON ME!
EVEN MIGHTY ODIN HAD NOT THE HEART TO DEAL SO HARSHLY WITH HIS SON... SO HE GAVE ME THE POWER!
AND, IN HIS MONUMENTAL SORROW, HE HATH FORGOTTEN THAT I STILL POSSESS HIS ODIN POWER...THE GREATEST POWER OF ALL!
SEIDRING! TO MY SIDE! I HAVE A MISSION FOR THEE!
NAY, ETERNAL ONE! I OBEY THEE NO LONGER! 'TIS I WHO NOW POSSESS THE POWER!
YOU DARE...??!!
VERILY, MY LORD... I DARE!
KNOW YOU THEN THAT ODIN CALLS THEE TRAITOR!
THY NAME SHALL LIVE IN INFAMY, SO LONG AS MEMORY ENDURES!
6

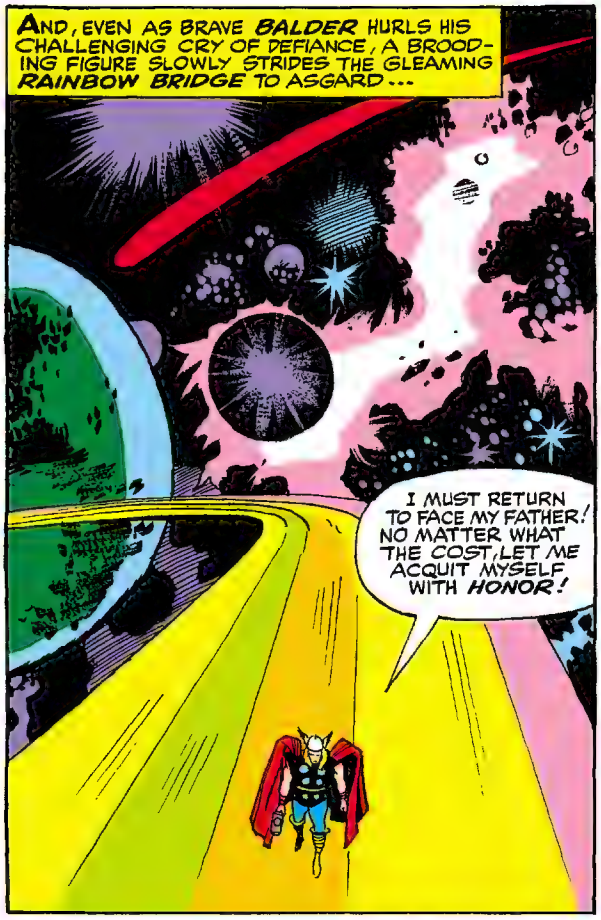

THOUGH THE POWER NOW IS THINE... THE HERITAGE BE ODIN'S! STRIKE AS THOU WILT... I FIGHT WHILST THERE BE BREATH WITHIN ME!
EMPTY WORDS, MY LORDS! NONE CAN WITHSTAND THE ODIN POWER... NAY, NOT EVEN HE FOR WHOM IT WAS NAMED!

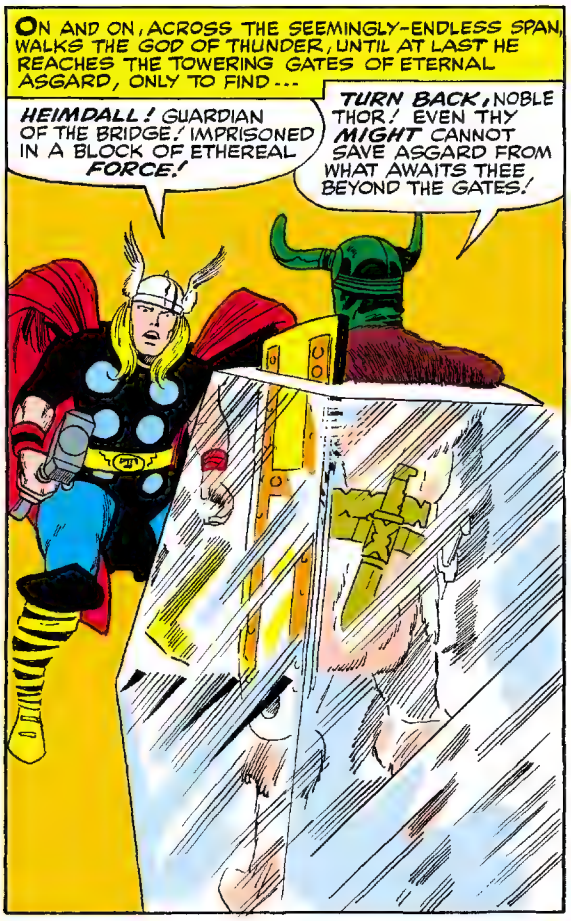

IT CANNOT END THUS! THOU ART NOT FIT TO RULE! POWER, WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, MUST BE ITS OWN UNDOING!

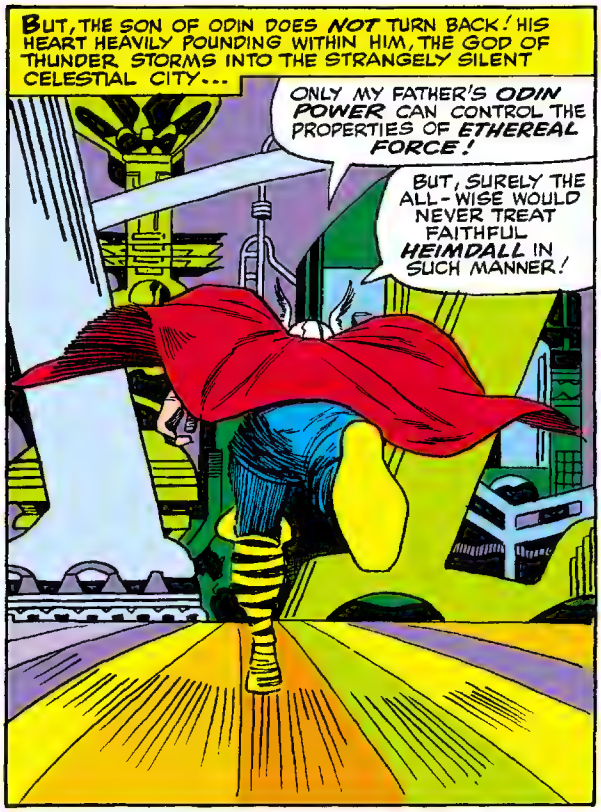

NOBLE WORDS, MY LORD! A PITY THEY COULD NOT STEM THE FURY OF THE ODIN POWER!
THY REIGN IS ENDED! THE ERA OF SEIDRING, THE ALL-POWERFUL, HAS NOW BEGUN!

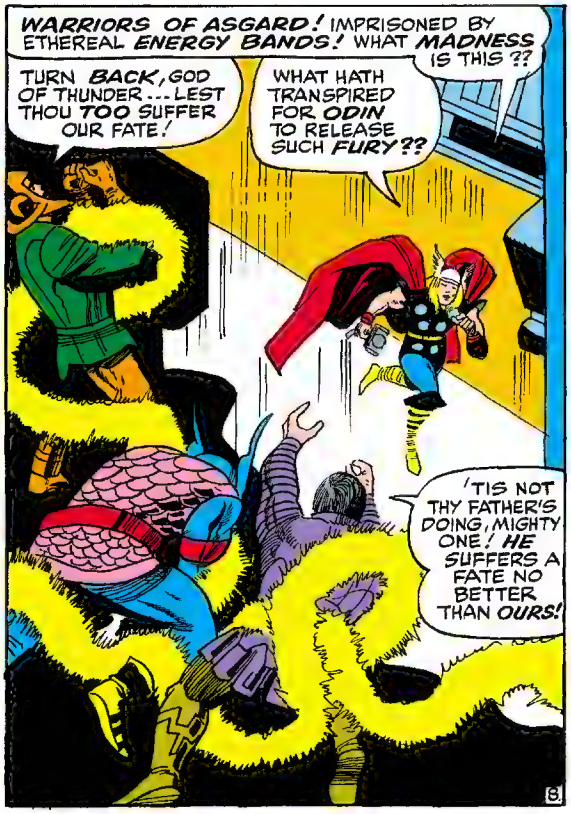

SEIDRING! WHAT FATE HATH BEFALLEN OMNI-POTENT ODIN?
BACK, BALDER! LOWER THY HEAD! PAY HOMAGE TO THE NEW OVERLORD OF ASGARD!

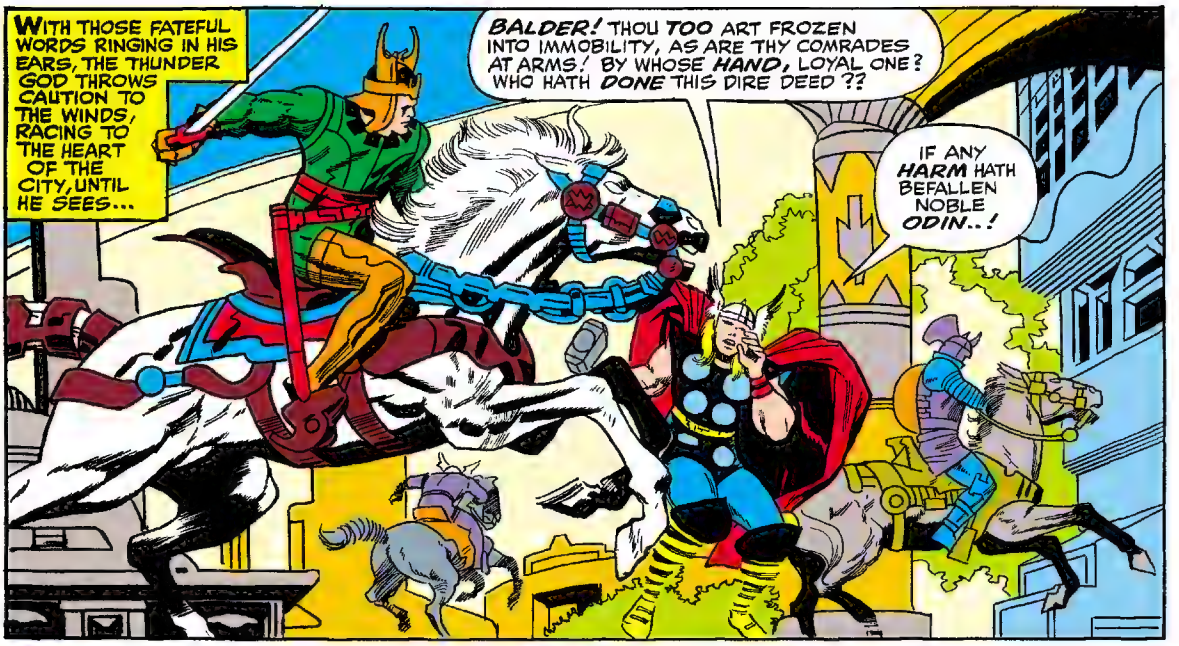
ODIN IS DETHRONED! I AM THE POWER NOW! SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO SEIDRING, OR FACE THE FURY OF THE ODIN POWER!
ALLEGIANCE TO SUCH AS THEE?? I WOULD SUFFER DAMNATION FIRST!

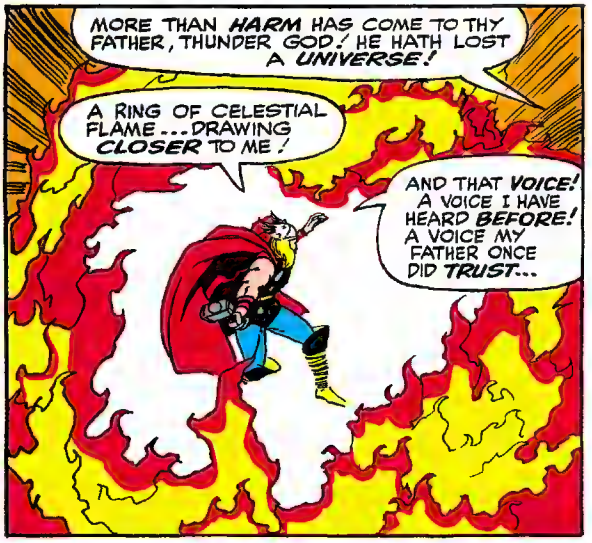

AND, EVEN AS BRAVE BALDER HURLS HIS CHALLENGING CRY OF DEFIANCE, A BROODING FIGURE SLOWLY STRIDES THE GLEAMING RAINBOW BRIDGE TO ASGARD...
I MUST RETURN TO FACE MY FATHER! NO MATTER WHAT THE COST, LET ME ACQUIT MYSELF WITH HONOR!

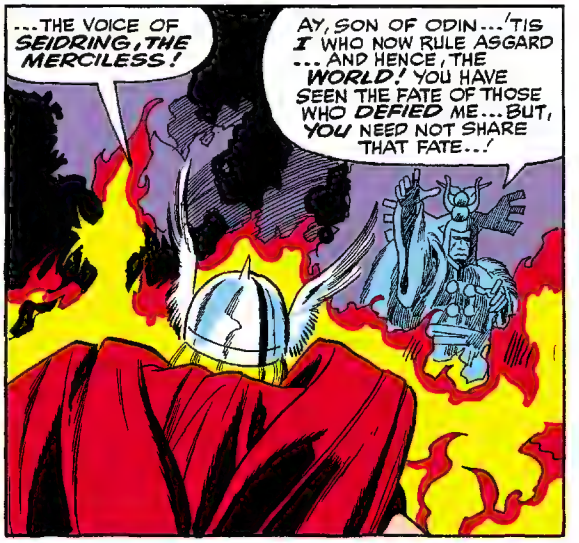

ON AND ON, ACROSS THE SEEMINGLY-ENDLESS SPAN, WALKS THE GOD OF THUNDER, UNTIL AT LAST HE REACHES THE TOWERING GATES OF ETERNAL ASGARD, ONLY TO FIND...
HEIMDALL! GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE! IMPRISONED IN A BLOCK OF ETHEREAL FORCE!
TURN BACK, NOBLE THOR! EVEN THY MIGHT CANNOT SAVE ASGARD FROM WHAT AWAITS THEE BEYOND THE GATES!

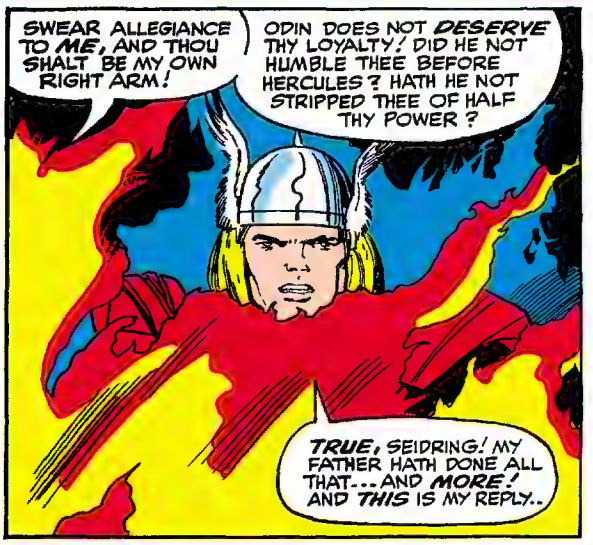

BUT, THE SON OF ODIN DOES NOT TURN BACK! HIS HEART HEAVILY POUNDING WITHIN HIM, THE GOD OF THUNDER STORMS INTO THE STRANGELY SILENT CELESTIAL CITY...
ONLY MY FATHER'S ODIN POWER CAN CONTROL THE PROPERTIES OF ETHEREAL FORCE!
BUT, SURELY THE ALL-WISE WOULD NEVER TREAT FAITHFUL HEIMDALL IN SUCH MANNER!

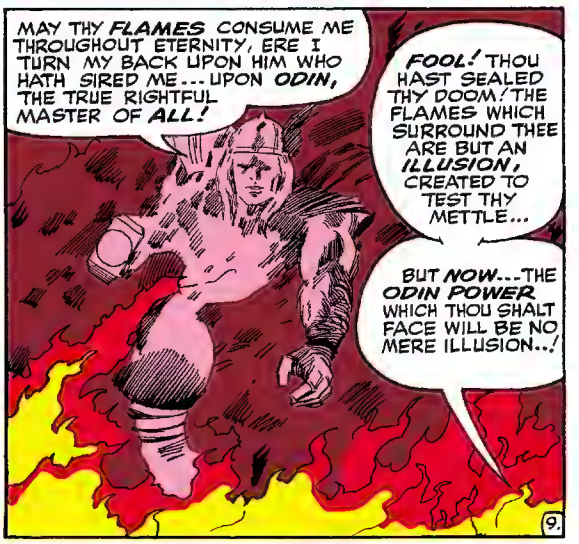

WARRIORS OF ASGARD! IMPRISONED BY ETHEREAL ENERGY BANDS! WHAT MADNESS IS THIS??
TURN BACK, GOD OF THUNDER... LEST THOU TOO SUFFER OUR FATE!
WHAT HATH TRANSPIRED FOR ODIN TO RELEASE SUCH FURY??
'TIS NOT THY FATHER'S DOING, MIGHTY ONE! HE SUFFERS A FATE NO BETTER THAN OURS!


WITH THOSE FATEFUL WORDS RINGING IN HIS EARS, THE THUNDER GOD THROWS CAUTION TO THE WINDS, RACING TO THE HEART OF THE CITY, UNTIL HE SEES...
BALDER! THOU TOO ART FROZEN INTO IMMOBILITY, AS ARE THY COMRADES AT ARMS! BY WHOSE HAND, LOYAL ONE? WHO HATH DONE THIS DIRE DEED??
IF ANY HARM HATH BEFALLEN NOBLE ODIN..!

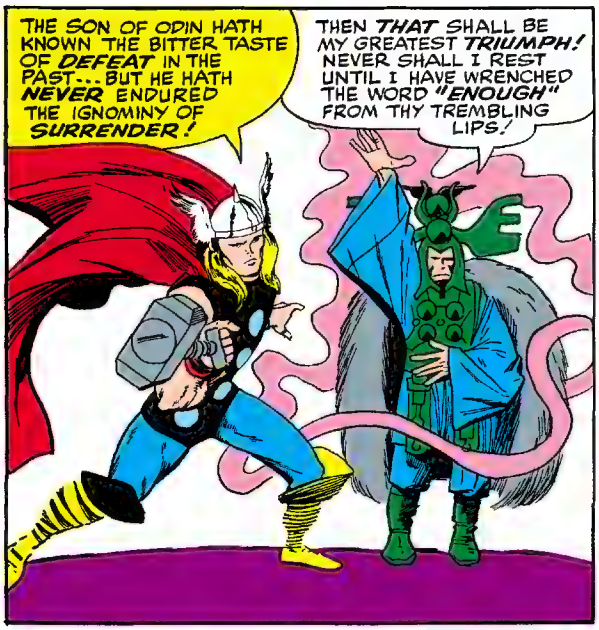

MORE THAN HARM HAS COME TO THY FATHER, THUNDER GOD! HE HATH LOST A UNIVERSE!
A RING OF CELESTIAL FLAME...DRAWING CLOSER TO ME!
AND THAT VOICE! A VOICE I HAVE HEARD BEFORE! A VOICE MY FATHER ONCE DID TRUST...

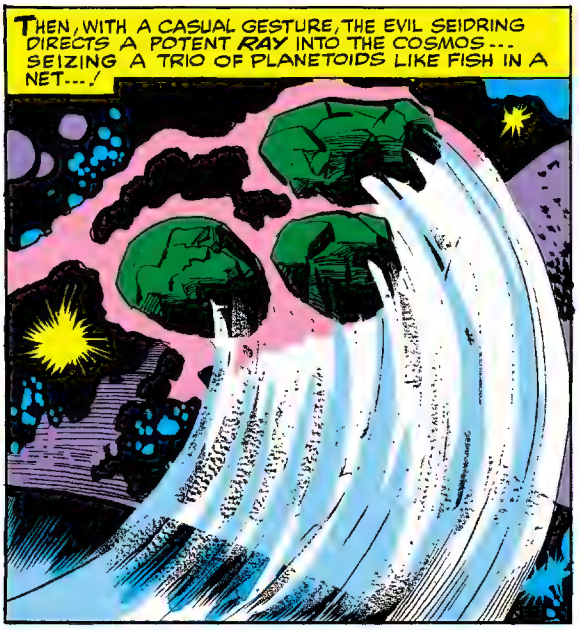

...THE VOICE OF SEIDRING, THE MERCILESS!
AY, SON OF ODIN...'TIS I WHO NOW RULE ASGARD ...AND HENCE, THE WORLD! YOU HAVE SEEN THE FATE OF THOSE WHO DEFIED ME...BUT, YOU NEED NOT SHARE THAT FATE..!

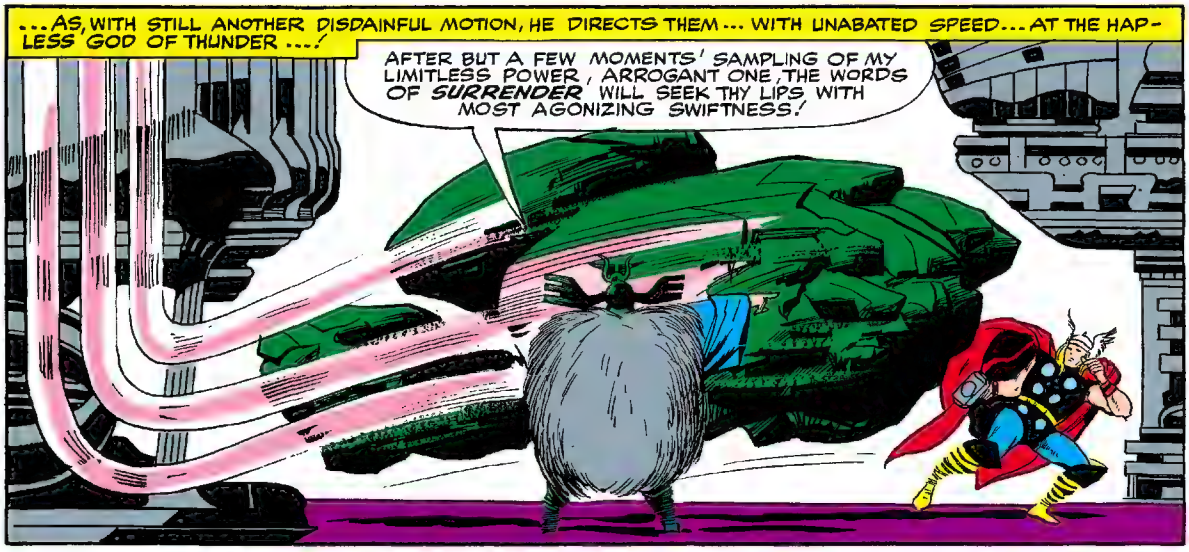

SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO ME, AND THOU SHALT BE MY OWN RIGHT ARM!
ODIN DOES NOT DESERVE THY LOYALTY! DID HE NOT HUMBLE THEE BEFORE HERCULES? HATH HE NOT STRIPPED THEE OF HALF THY POWER?
TRUE, SEIDRING! MY FATHER HATH DONE ALL THAT...AND MORE! AND THIS IS MY REPLY..

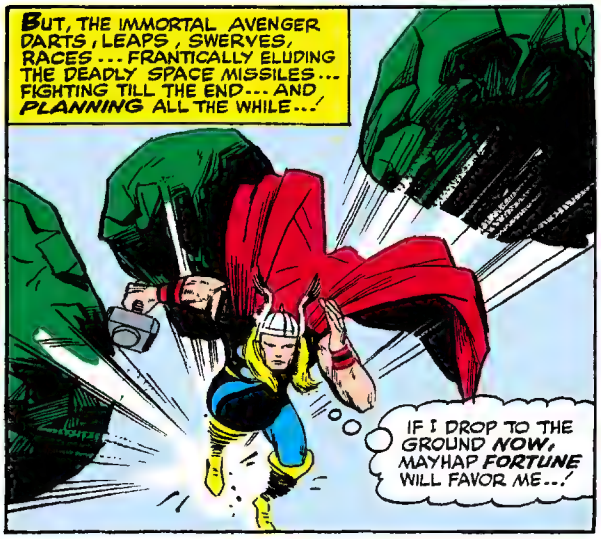

MAY THY FLAMES CONSUME ME THROUGHOUT ETERNITY, ERE I TURN MY BACK UPON HIM WHO HATH SIRED ME...UPON ODIN, THE TRUE RIGHTFUL MASTER OF ALL!
FOOL! THOU HAST SEALED THY DOOM! THE FLAMES WHICH SURROUND THEE ARE BUT AN ILLUSION, CREATED TO TEST THY METTLE...
BUT NOW...THE ODIN POWER WHICH THOU SHALT FACE WILL BE NO MERE ILLUSION..!

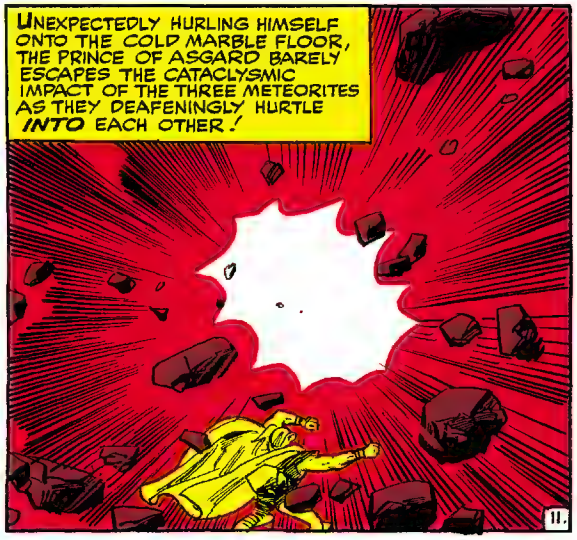
AND, IN HOLLYWOOD, A FANTASTICALLY GARBED, BREATH-TAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL FEMALE ENTERS THE OFFICE OF THE ONE CALLED PLUTO...
COME IN! I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
OF COURSE! DO MEN NOT WAIT FOR ME ALWAYS?
AND WHAT OF MY COSTUME? DOES IT SUIT THE ROLE YOU WISH ME TO PLAY?
INDEED! IT TRULY BEFITS THE ONE WHO IS QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS!
ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU HAVE REHEARSED YOUR PART TO PERFECTION?
DO NOT FEAR! I SHALL NOT FAIL!
HERCULES CANNOT HELP BUT LOSE HIS HEART TO ME!
AND, HE SHALL REGRET IT... FOREVER-MORE!
TRUE... TRUE! BUT, YOU ARE MERELY ONE SEGMENT OF MY MASTER PLAN!
THIS INNOCENT-LOOKING CONTRACT IS STILL ANOTHER... AN EQUALLY DIABOLICAL GAMBIT!
FOR, WITHIN MY HAND, I HOLD A GENUINE OLYMPIAN PACT... ONE WHICH CAN NEVER BE BROKEN... WHICH LASTS FOR ALL ETERNITY!
WHAT A PITY THAT HERCULES WILL NOT BEGIN TO SUSPECT THAT WHICH HE IS ABOUT TO SIGN!
BUT, EVEN AS THE MIGHTY-MUSCLED SON OF ZEUS INNOCENTLY APPROACHES THE MYSTERIOUS STUDIO, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS THE SPECTACULAR TABLEAU WHICH AWAITS US IN ASGARD...
HOW CAN YOU EXPECT TO ATTACK ONE WHO POSSESS THE ODIN POWER?
SEE HOW EASILY I DISTORT THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF TO DEFLECT THY BLOW!
NO MATTER, EVIL ONE...
.. DO AS THOU WILT... THOR FIGHTS ON!
10


THE SON OF ODIN HATH KNOWN THE BITTER TASTE OF DEFEAT IN THE PAST... BUT HE HATH NEVER ENDURED THE IGNOMINY OF SURRENDER!
THEN THAT SHALL BE MY GREATEST TRIUMPH! NEVER SHALL I REST UNTIL I HAVE WRENCHED THE WORD "ENOUGH" FROM THY TREMBLING LIPS!

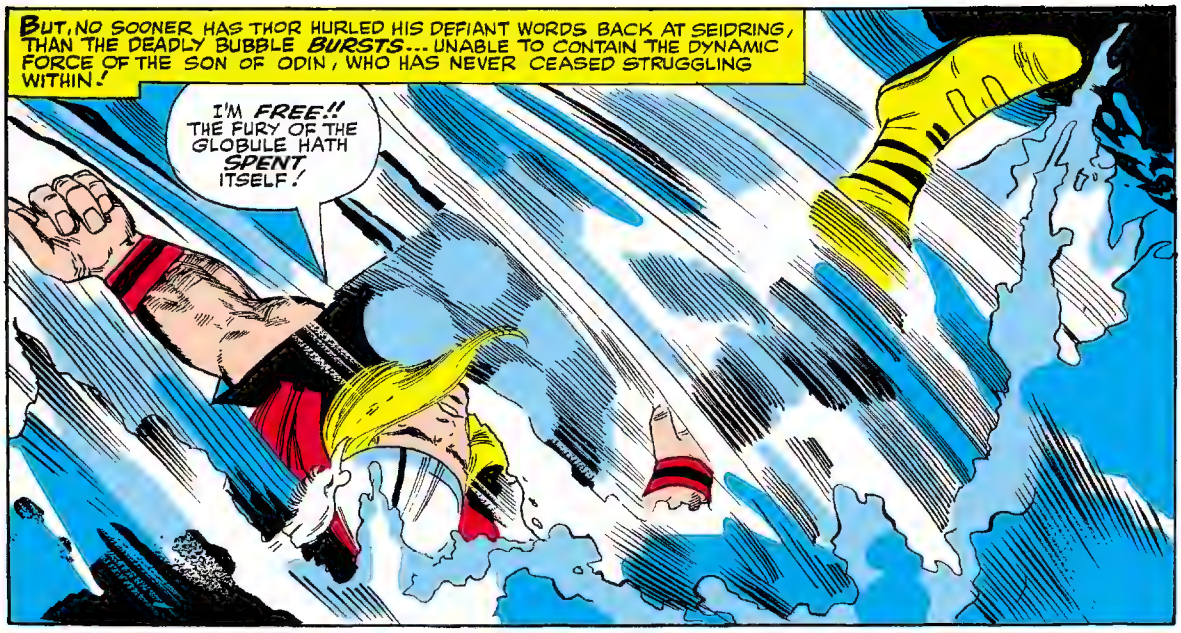

THEN, WITH A CASUAL GESTURE, THE EVIL SEIDRING DIRECTS A POTENT RAY INTO THE COSMOS... SEIZING A TRIO OF PLANETOIDS LIKE FISH IN A NET...!

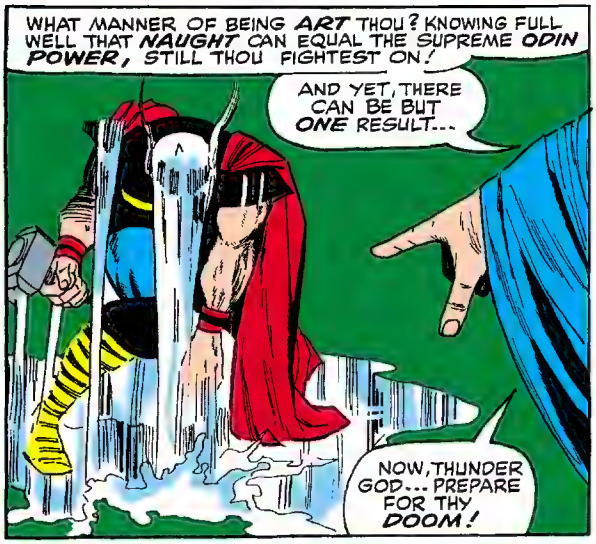

...AS, WITH STILL ANOTHER DISDAINFUL MOTION, HE DIRECTS THEM... WITH UNABATED SPEED... AT THE HAPLESS GOD OF THUNDER...!
AFTER BUT A FEW MOMENTS' SAMPLING OF MY LIMITLESS POWER, ARROGANT ONE, THE WORDS OF SURRENDER WILL SEEK THY LIPS WITH MOST AGONIZING SWIFTNESS!

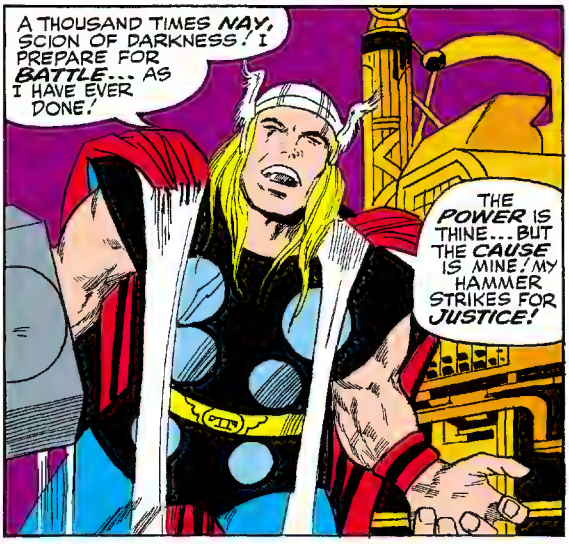

BUT, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER DARTS, LEAPS, SWERVES, RACES... FRANTICALLY ELUDING THE DEADLY SPACE MISSILES... FIGHTING TILL THE END... AND PLANNING ALL THE WHILE...!
IF I DROP TO THE GROUND NOW, MAYHAP FORTUNE WILL FAVOR ME...!

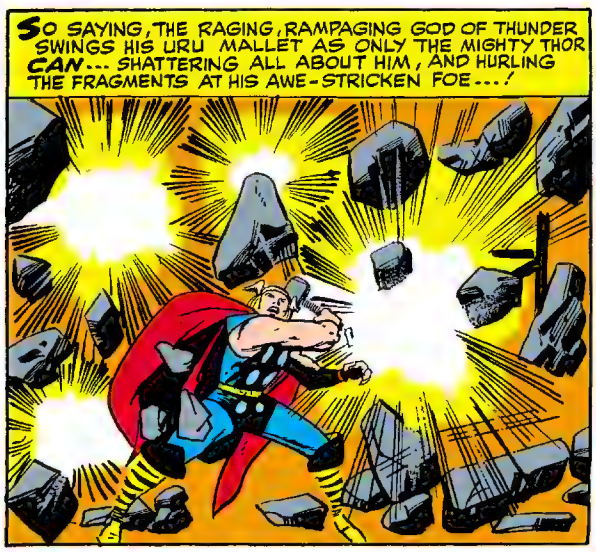

UNEXPECTEDLY HURLING HIMSELF ONTO THE COLD MARBLE FLOOR, THE PRINCE OF ASGARD BARELY ESCAPES THE CATACLYSMIC IMPACT OF THE THREE METEORITES AS THEY DEAFENINGLY HURTLE INTO EACH OTHER!

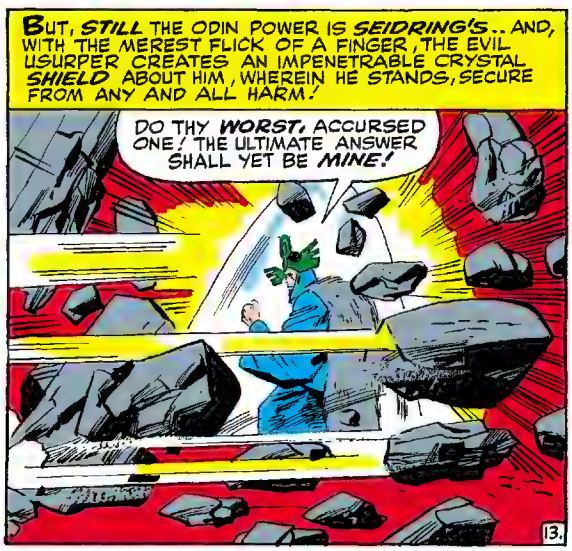
I THANK THEE, GOD OF THUNDER, FOR PROVIDING ME SUCH SPORT!
AND NOW, LET THE GAME CONTINUE---
IS THERE NO END TO THIS MADNESS?? A STRANGE GLOBULAR SUBSTANCE BURSTS FORTH FROM THE GROUND BENEATH ME..!
THEN, BEFORE THE VALIANT ASGARDIAN CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, A MYSTIC, IRRESISTIBLE FORCE PULLS HIM INTO THE CENTER OF THE FANTASTIC GLOBULE!
I'M BEING WHIRLED ABOUT... IN A VORTEX OF LIQUIFIED WOLFBANE!
USING THE POWER HE HATH STOLEN FROM MY FATHER, SEIDRING TOYS WITH ME AT WILL!
THOU CANST NOT BREAK FREE OF YON GLOBULE -- AND LO, THE WOLFBANE SHALL DRAIN THE LAST REMAINING BREATH FROM THY BODY!
THEREFORE, THOU HAST NO CHOICE BUT TO SURRENDER!
NEVER, THOU BASEST OF VILLAINS!!
THOUGH THIS BREATH BE MY LAST... I SAY THEE... NEVER!
12.

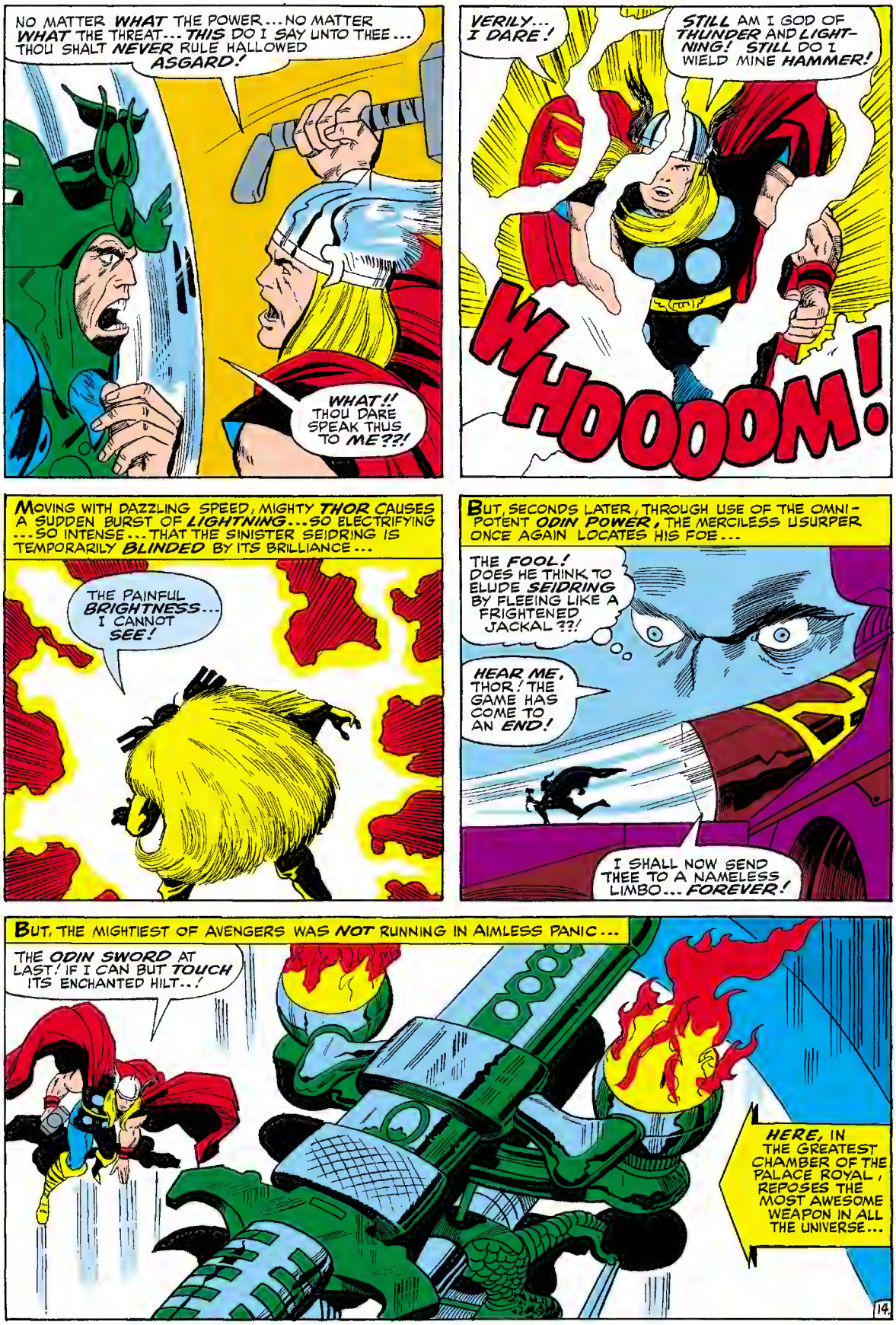

BUT, NO SOONER HAS THOR HURLED HIS DEFIANT WORDS BACK AT SEIDRING, THAN THE DEADLY BUBBLE BURSTS... UNABLE TO CONTAIN THE DYNAMIC FORCE OF THE SON OF ODIN, WHO HAS NEVER CEASED STRUGGLING WITHIN!
I'M FREE!! THE FURY OF THE GLOBULE HATH SPENT ITSELF!

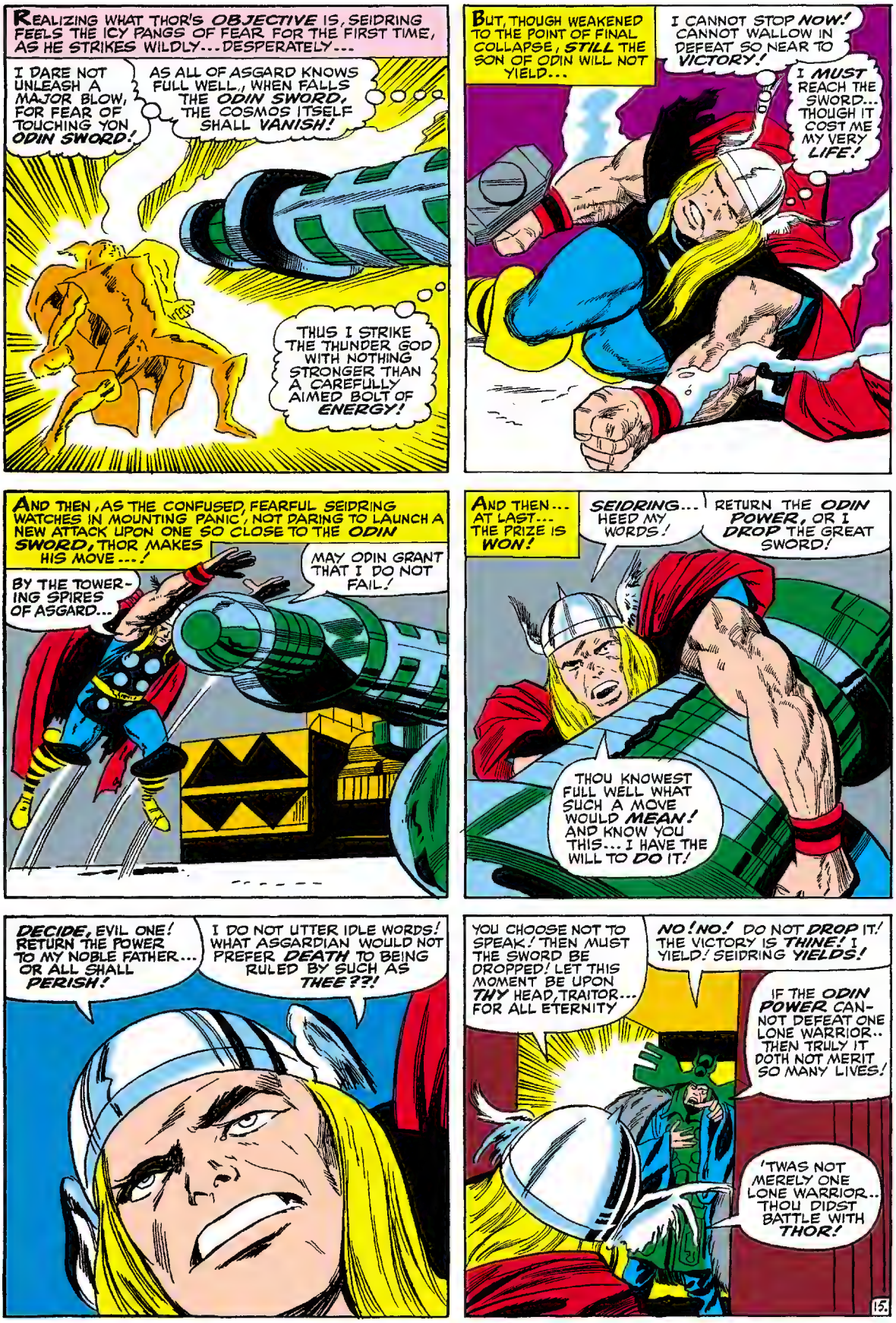

WHAT MANNER OF BEING ART THOU? KNOWING FULL WELL THAT NAUGHT CAN EQUAL THE SUPREME ODIN POWER, STILL THOU FIGHTEST ON!
AND YET, THERE CAN BE BUT ONE RESULT...
NOW, THUNDER GOD... PREPARE FOR THY DOOM!


A THOUSAND TIMES NAY, SCION OF DARKNESS! I PREPARE FOR BATTLE... AS I HAVE EVER DONE!
THE POWER IS THINE... BUT THE CAUSE IS MINE! MY HAMMER STRIKES FOR JUSTICE!


SO SAYING, THE RAGING, RAMPAGING GOD OF THUNDER SWINGS HIS URU MALLET AS ONLY THE MIGHTY THOR CAN... SHATTERING ALL ABOUT HIM, AND HURLING THE FRAGMENTS AT HIS AWE-STRICKEN FOE...!

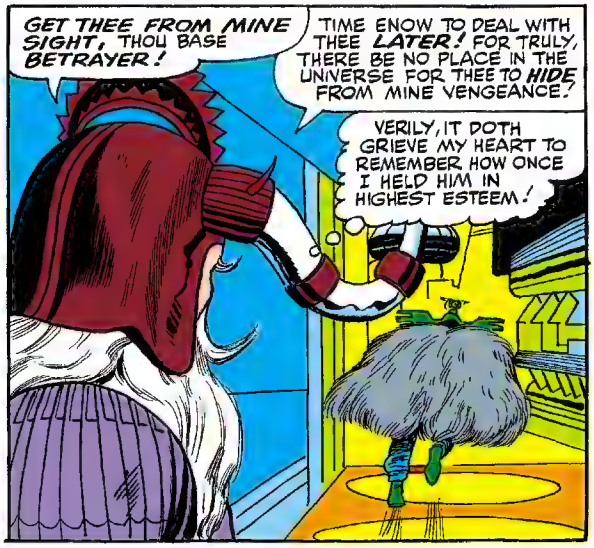

BUT, STILL THE ODIN POWER IS SEIDRING'S.. AND, WITH THE MEREST FLICK OF A FINGER, THE EVIL USURPER CREATES AN IMPENETRABLE CRYSTAL SHIELD ABOUT HIM, WHEREIN HE STANDS, SECURE FROM ANY AND ALL HARM!
DO THY WORST, ACCURSED ONE! THE ULTIMATE ANSWER SHALL YET BE MINE!

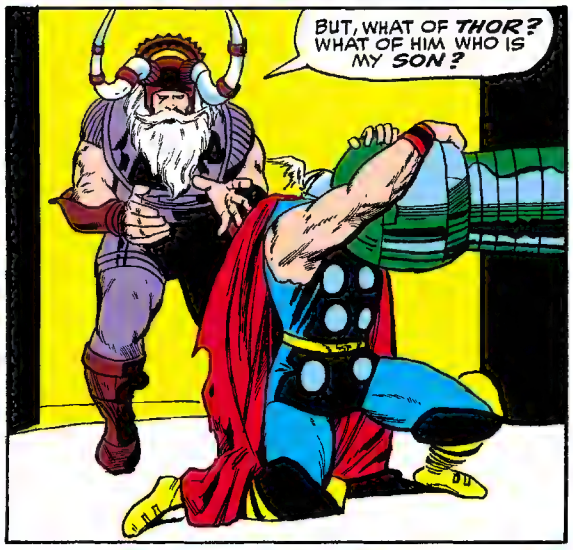

NO MATTER WHAT THE POWER...NO MATTER WHAT THE THREAT...THIS DO I SAY UNTO THEE... THOU SHALT NEVER RULE HALLOWED ASGARD!
WHAT!! THOU DARE SPEAK THUS TO ME??!
VERILY... I DARE!
STILL AM I GOD OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING! STILL DO I WIELD MINE HAMMER!
WHOOOOM!
MOVING WITH DAZZLING SPEED, MIGHTY THOR CAUSES A SUDDEN BURST OF LIGHTNING...SO ELECTRIFYING ...SO INTENSE...THAT THE SINISTER SEIDRING IS TEMPORARILY BLINDED BY ITS BRILLIANCE...
THE PAINFUL BRIGHTNESS... I CANNOT SEE!
BUT, SECONDS LATER, THROUGH USE OF THE OMNIPOTENT ODIN POWER, THE MERCILESS USURPER ONCE AGAIN LOCATES HIS FOE...
THE FOOL! DOES HE THINK TO ELUDE SEIDRING BY FLEEING LIKE A FRIGHTENED JACKAL ??!
HEAR ME, THOR! THE GAME HAS COME TO AN END!
I SHALL NOW SEND THEE TO A NAMELESS LIMBO... FOREVER!
BUT, THE MIGHTIEST OF AVENGERS WAS NOT RUNNING IN AIMLESS PANIC...
THE ODIN SWORD AT LAST! IF I CAN BUT TOUCH ITS ENCHANTED HILT..!
HERE, IN THE GREATEST CHAMBER OF THE PALACE ROYAL, REPOSES THE MOST AWESOME WEAPON IN ALL THE UNIVERSE...


REALIZING WHAT THOR'S OBJECTIVE IS, SEIDRING FEELS THE ICY PANGS OF FEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME, AS HE STRIKES WILDLY... DESPERATELY...
I DARE NOT UNLEASH A MAJOR BLOW, FOR FEAR OF TOUCHING YON ODIN SWORD!
AS ALL OF ASGARD KNOWS FULL WELL, WHEN FALLS THE ODIN SWORD, THE COSMOS ITSELF SHALL VANISH!
THUS I STRIKE THE THUNDER GOD WITH NOTHING STRONGER THAN A CAREFULLY AIMED BOLT OF ENERGY!
BUT, THOUGH WEAKENED TO THE POINT OF FINAL COLLAPSE, STILL THE SON OF ODIN WILL NOT YIELD...
I CANNOT STOP NOW! CANNOT WALLOW IN DEFEAT SO NEAR TO VICTORY!
I MUST REACH THE SWORD... THOUGH IT COST ME MY VERY LIFE!
AND THEN, AS THE CONFUSED, FEARFUL SEIDRING WATCHES IN MOUNTING PANIC, NOT DARING TO LAUNCH A NEW ATTACK UPON ONE SO CLOSE TO THE ODIN SWORD, THOR MAKES HIS MOVE ---!
BY THE TOWERING SPIRES OF ASGARD...
MAY ODIN GRANT THAT I DO NOT FAIL!
AND THEN... AT LAST... THE PRIZE IS WON!
SEIDRING... HEED MY WORDS!
RETURN THE ODIN POWER, OR I DROP THE GREAT SWORD!
THOU KNOWEST FULL WELL WHAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD MEAN! AND KNOW YOU THIS... I HAVE THE WILL TO DO IT!
DECIDE, EVIL ONE! RETURN THE POWER TO MY NOBLE FATHER... OR ALL SHALL PERISH!
I DO NOT UTTER IDLE WORDS! WHAT ASGARDIAN WOULD NOT PREFER DEATH TO BEING RULED BY SUCH AS THEE??!
YOU CHOOSE NOT TO SPEAK! THEN MUST THE SWORD BE DROPPED! LET THIS MOMENT BE UPON THY HEAD, TRAITOR... FOR ALL ETERNITY
NO! NO! DO NOT DROP IT! THE VICTORY IS THINE! I YIELD! SEIDRING YIELDS!
IF THE ODIN POWER CANNOT DEFEAT ONE LONE WARRIOR.. THEN TRULY IT DOTH NOT MERIT SO MANY LIVES!
'TWAS NOT MERELY ONE LONE WARRIOR.. THOU DIDST BATTLE WITH THOR!
15.

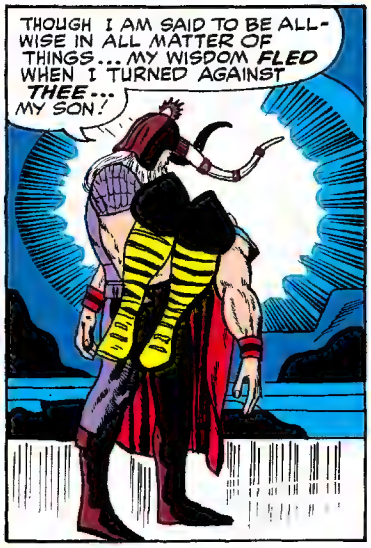
THOU MUST STAND AWAY FROM YON SWORD! THE SLIGHTEST JAR... THE SMALLEST MOVE... COULD SPELL DISASTER!
LET THE POWER BE ODIN'S ONCE MORE! SEIDRING YIELDS! THE BATTLE IS ENDED!

AND THEN, A MAJESTIC FIGURE APPEARS BEFORE THEIR EYES..BATHED IN AN AURA OF SHIMMERING, CRACKLING FORCE...!
THE POWER IS MINE ONCE AGAIN! SO BE IT!
ODIN!!


GET THEE FROM MINE SIGHT, THOU BASE BETRAYER!
TIME ENOW TO DEAL WITH THEE LATER! FOR TRULY, THERE BE NO PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE FOR THEE TO HIDE FROM MINE VENGEANCE!
VERILY, IT DOTH GRIEVE MY HEART TO REMEMBER HOW ONCE I HELD HIM IN HIGHEST ESTEEM!


BUT, WHAT OF THOR? WHAT OF HIM WHO IS MY SON?

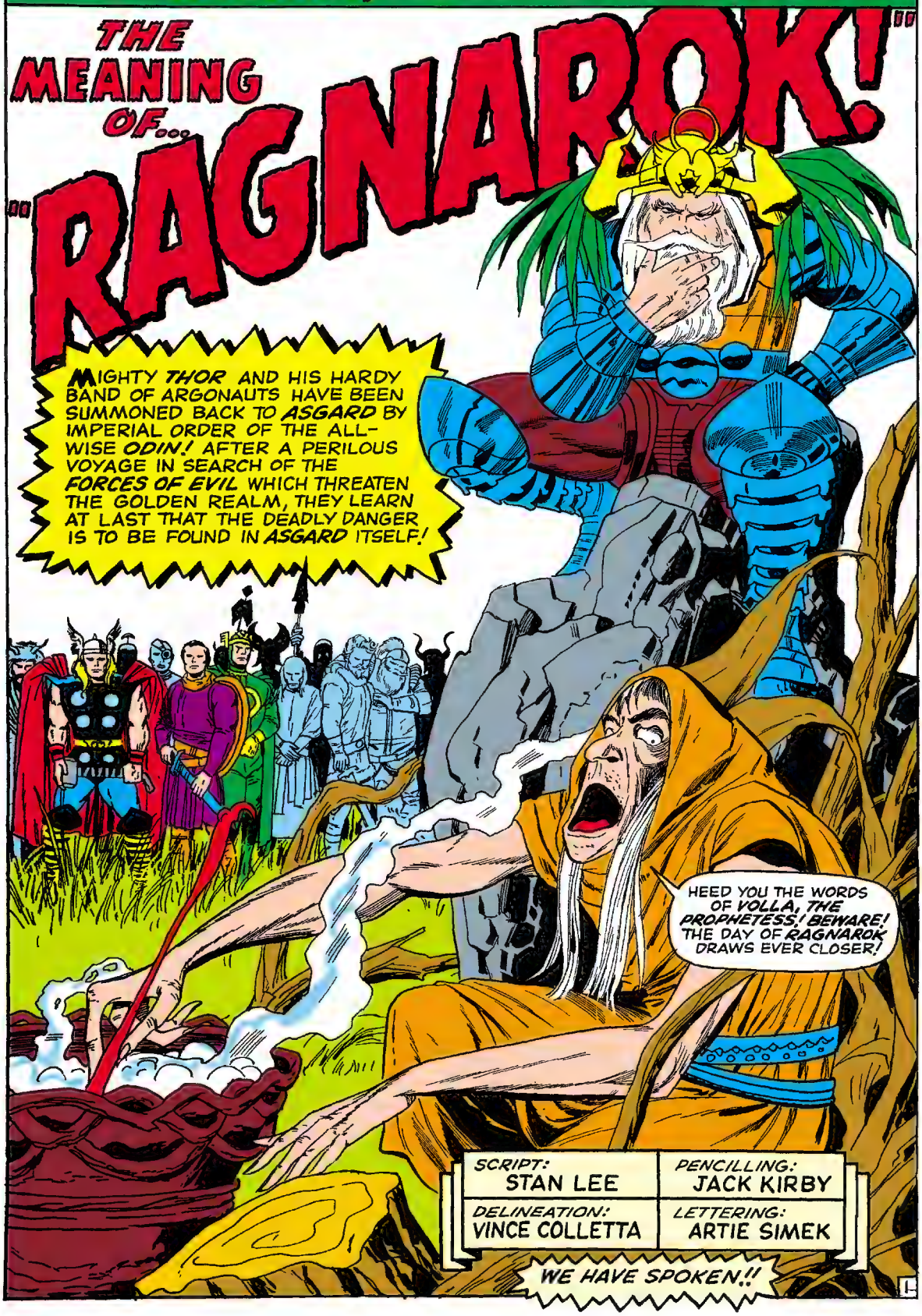
CONSCIOUSNESS HATH FLED FROM THY BODY! THY EARS HEAR NOT THE WORDS OF ODIN... WORDS OF HIM WHO HATH JUDGED THEE TOO HARSHLY!


THOUGH I AM SAID TO BE ALL-WISE IN ALL MATTER OF THINGS... MY WISDOM FLED WHEN I TURNED AGAINST THEE... MY SON!

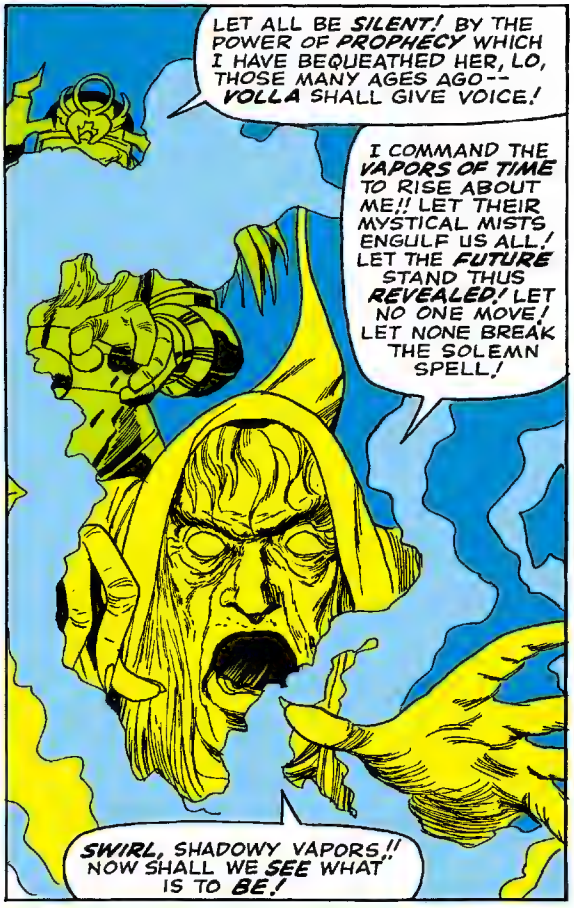
FOR, ABOVE ALL ELSE, I HOLD THIS TRUE...
THOU ART THE NOBLEST ASGARDIAN OF ALL!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE SECRET OF PLUTO!
WE HAVE SPOKEN!

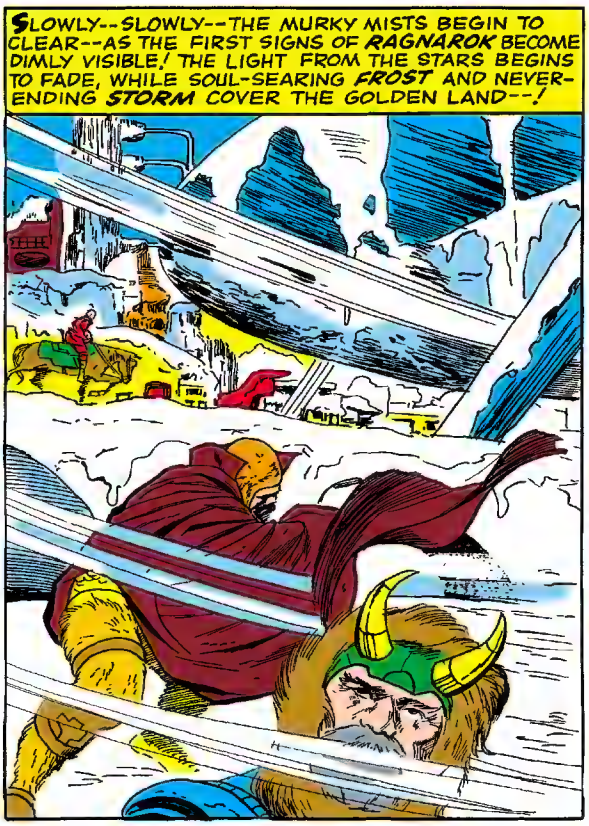
TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS

THE MEANING OF... "RAGNAROK!"


MIGHTY THOR AND HIS HARDY BAND OF ARGONAUTS HAVE BEEN SUMMONED BACK TO ASGARD BY IMPERIAL ORDER OF THE ALL-WISE ODIN! AFTER A PERILOUS VOYAGE IN SEARCH OF THE FORCES OF EVIL WHICH THREATEN THE GOLDEN REALM, THEY LEARN AT LAST THAT THE DEADLY DANGER IS TO BE FOUND IN ASGARD ITSELF!
HEED YOU THE WORDS OF VOLLA, THE PROPHETESS! BEWARE! THE DAY OF RAGNAROK DRAWS EVER CLOSER!
SCRIPT: STAN LEE
PENCILLING: JACK KIRBY
DELINEATION: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK
WE HAVE SPOKEN!!

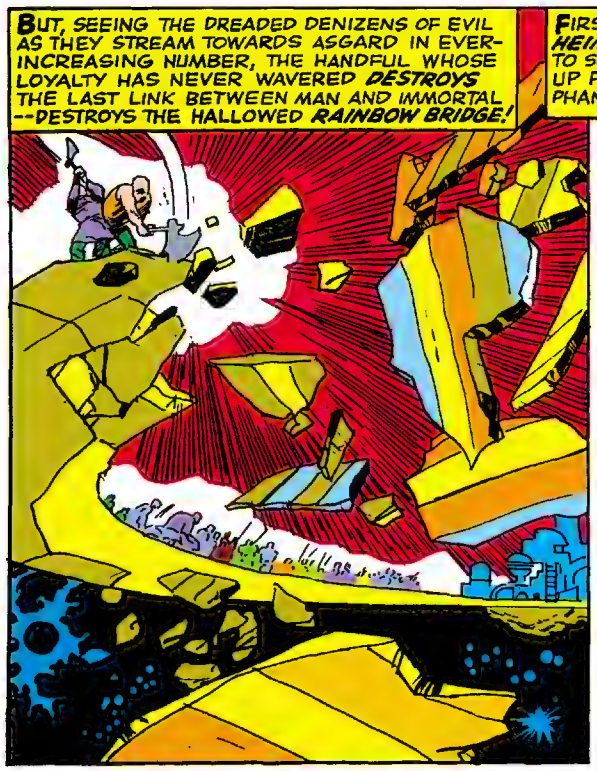
RAGNAROK! THE VERY WORD HAS THE POWER TO MAKE IMMORTALS TREMBLE! RAGNAROK! THE MOST DREADED DANGER OF ALL TIME! RAGNAROK! THAT WHICH HAS BEEN PREDICTED! THAT WHICH FORCE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE CAN PREVENT! SUCH IS--RAGNAROK!!!
AT LAST, OMNIPOTENT ODIN HATH CONFESSED THE TRUE REASON HE DISPATCHED US UPON OUR QUEST!
WE HAD BEEN TOO LONG WITHOUT BATTLE--TOO LONG WITHOUT PURPOSE! OUR TEMPERS WERE FRAYED--OUR SWORD EDGES BLUNTED!
'TIS TRUE, GOD OF THUNDER! A WARRIOR WITH NO MISSION IS LIKE UNTO A SHIP WITH NO RUDDER!
STAY YOUR TONGUES! THE PROPHETESS BEGINS TO SPEAK! 'TIS RAGNAROK WHICH MOST CONCERNS US NOW!


LET ALL BE SILENT! BY THE POWER OF PROPHECY WHICH I HAVE BEQUEATHED HER, LO, THOSE MANY AGES AGO--VOLLA SHALL GIVE VOICE!
I COMMAND THE VAPORS OF TIME TO RISE ABOUT ME!! LET THEIR MYSTICAL MISTS ENGULF US ALL! LET THE FUTURE STAND THUS REVEALED! LET NO ONE MOVE! LET NONE BREAK THE SOLEMN SPELL!
SWIRL, SHADOWY VAPORS!! NOW SHALL WE SEE WHAT IS TO BE!


SLOWLY--SLOWLY--THE MURKY MISTS BEGIN TO CLEAR--AS THE FIRST SIGNS OF RAGNAROK BECOME DIMLY VISIBLE! THE LIGHT FROM THE STARS BEGINS TO FADE, WHILE SOUL-SEARING FROST AND NEVER-ENDING STORM COVER THE GOLDEN LAND--!

THENCE, GOADED BY NAMELESS FEAR--BY EVER-GROWING DREAD OF CERTAIN DOOM, FRIEND TURNS AGAINST FRIEND, BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER, IN A SENSELESS ORGY OF SAVAGE COMBAT--!
2

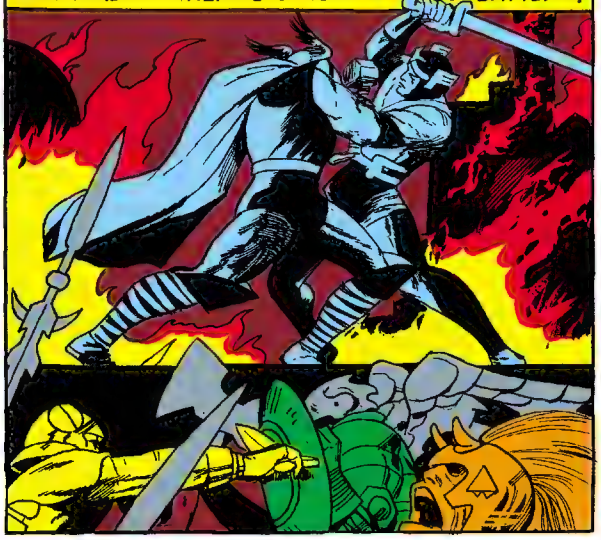
AS CHAOS AND CARNAGE ENVELOP THE REALM; AS A FURY AKIN TO MADNESS SWEEPS THE VERY SOUL OF ASGARD; THERE ARE THOSE WHO CRUMBLE BENEATH THE STRAIN--WHO JOIN THE RANKS OF THE FORCES OF EVIL--LEADING THEM IN ENDLESS ARRAY ACROSS THE SWEEPING SPAN OF BIFROST, THE RADIANT RAINBOW BRIDGE--!
THIS THEN IS THE ULTIMATE BETRAYAL--THE ULTIMATE ACT OF TREASON! BUT, SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A PROVOCATION SUCH AS THIS--THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A DAY SUCH AS THE DAY OF--RAGNAROK!


BUT, SEEING THE DREADED DENIZENS OF EVIL AS THEY STREAM TOWARDS ASGARD IN EVER-INCREASING NUMBER, THE HANDFUL WHOSE LOYALTY HAS NEVER WAVERED DESTROYS THE LAST LINK BETWEEN MAN AND IMMORTAL --DESTROYS THE HALLOWED RAINBOW BRIDGE!

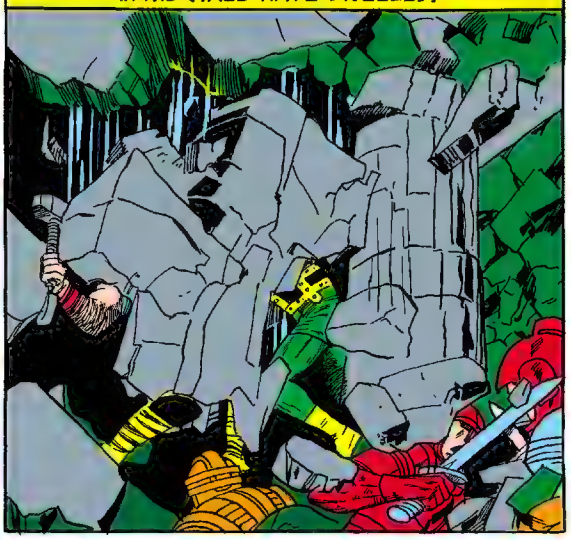
FIRST TO MEET THE IRRESISTIBLE ATTACK IS FAITHFUL HEIMDALL, WHOSE LAST KNOWN ACT OF DEVOTION IS TO SOUND THE ALARM--BEFORE HE IS SWALLOWED UP FOREVER IN THE INSANE PHANTASMAGORIA OF BATTLE--!

THEN, IN THE ROARING, AGONIZING CATACLYSM OF DESTRUCTION, THE NOBLEST ELDERS OF ALL--LED BY THE INSPIRING FIGURE OF LORDLY ODIN--BEGIN THEIR FINAL CHARGE--!
WE STRIKE FOR ASGARD!
WHILST THE MIGHTY GOD OF THUNDER, FIGHTING AS NEVER BEFORE, LEADS THE FLOWER OF ASGARD'S IMMORTAL WARRIORS IN AN ATTACK DESTINED TO SHATTER THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE!
IN THE NAME OF OMNIPOTENT ODIN--IN THE NAME OF ETERNAL ASGARD--BY THE POWER OF MY HAMMER--FOR THE GLORY OF OUR CAUSE--
ONWARRRRD
--TO VICTORY!
4

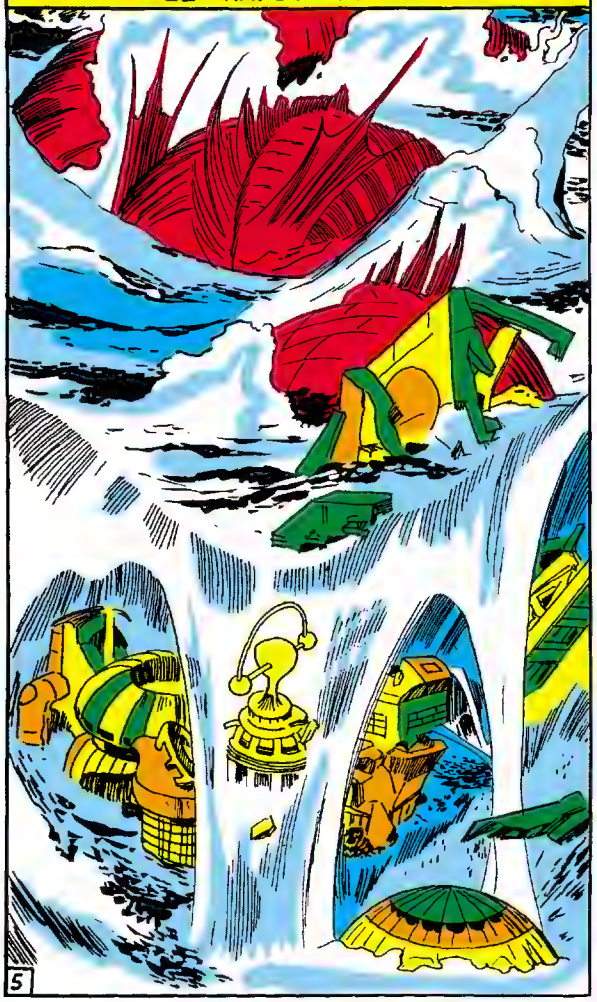
IT IS *THEN* THAT THE TWO SONS OF ODIN--THE *GOD OF THUNDER* AND THE *PRINCE OF EVIL*--MEET IN DEADLY COMBAT--FOR THE *LAST TIME*--AS THE WORLD ABOUT THEM IS CONSUMED BY BATTLE--!



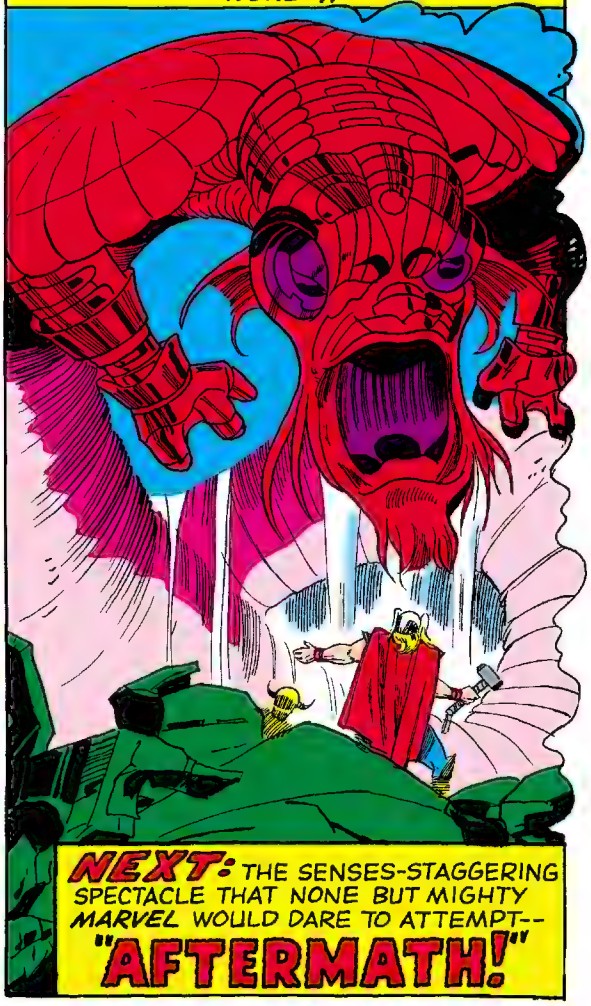
FOR, THERE CAN BE *NO VICTORY*--THERE CAN BE *NO SURVIVORS*--THERE CAN BE NAUGHT BUT THE *DISSOLUTION* OF THE LAND WHERE IMMORTALS HAVE DWELLED!



--UNTIL, AT LAST, ALL ASGARD TREMBLES UNDER THE GREATEST *UPHEAVAL* EVER KNOWN--AS THE SEETHING AND SWELLING OF THE MIGHTY *OCEANS* SIGNAL THE COMING OF THE FINAL ENEMY--THE *ULTIMATE* DESTROYER--



AS *LO*, THERE SHALL APPEAR THE *MIDGARD SERPENT*--PROCLAIMING THE DAY OF *RAGNAROK*!! *RAGNAROK*--THE TIME THE GODS *THEMSELVES* SHALL PERISH! *RAGNAROK*--THE *END OF THE WORLD*!!



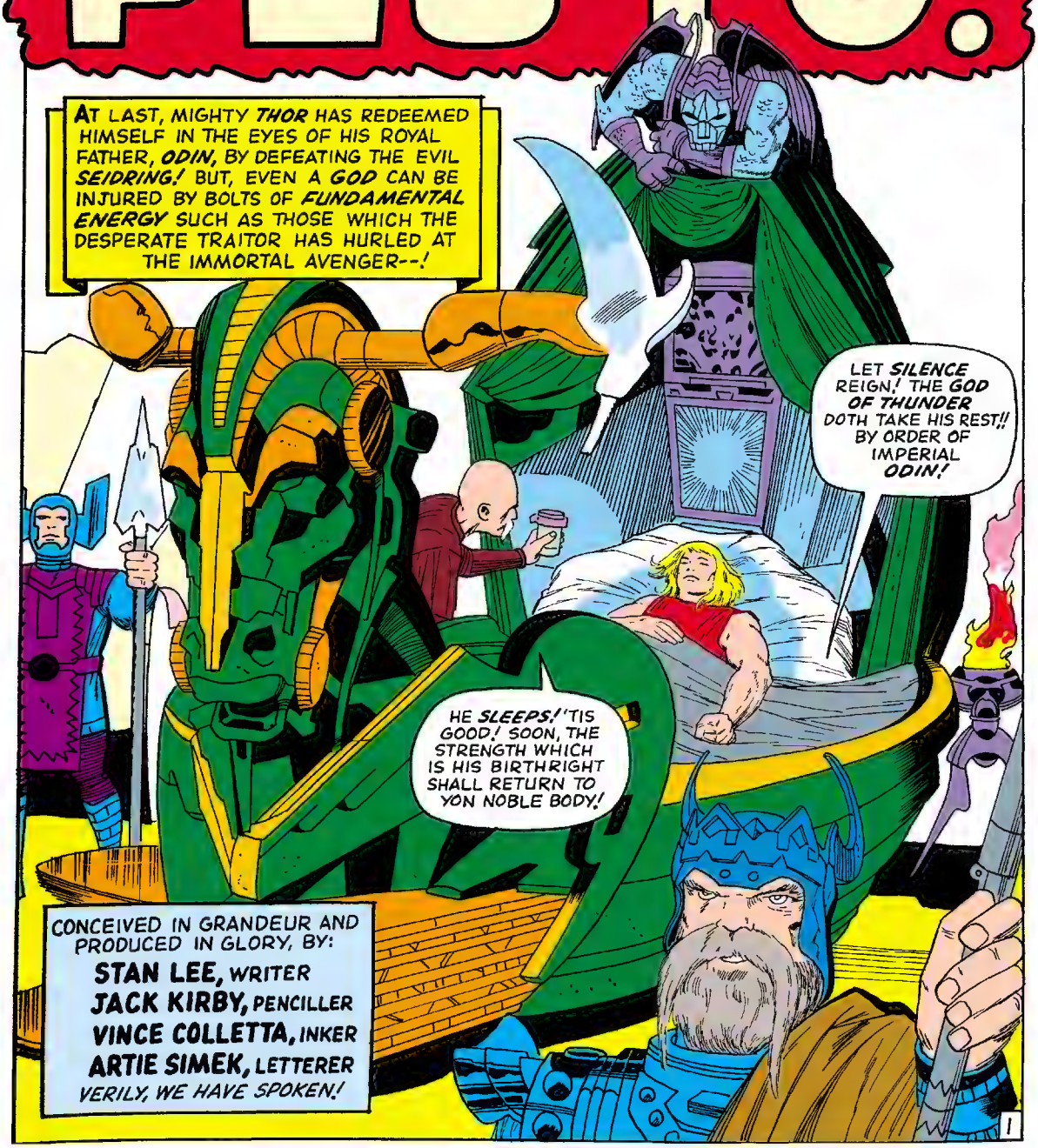
NEXT: THE SENSES-STAGGERING SPECTACLE THAT NONE BUT MIGHTY *MARVEL* WOULD DARE TO ATTEMPT--

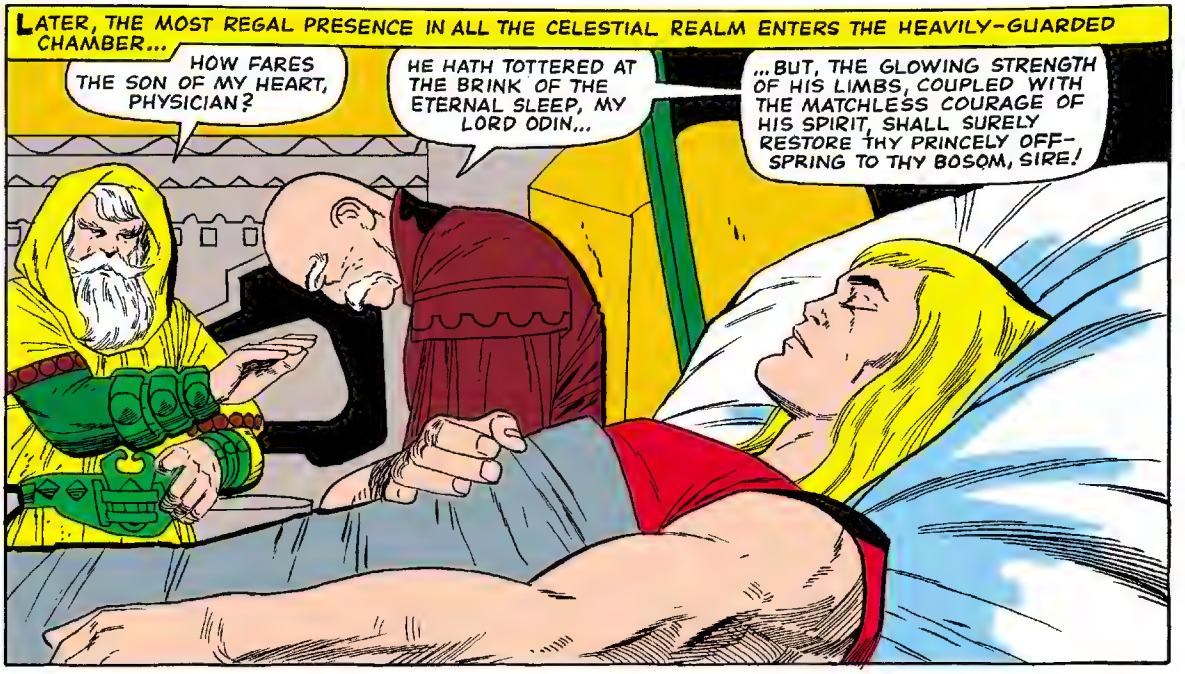
"AFTERMATH!"

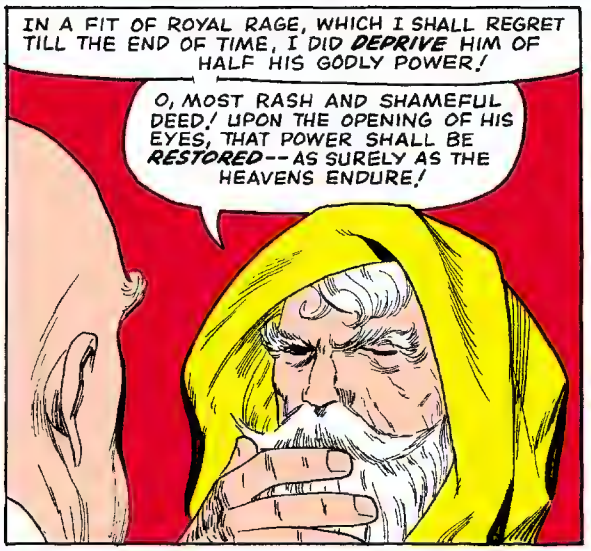
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
128
MAY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
IND.
GOD OF THUNDER and SON OF ZEUS
FACE
"THE POWER OF PLUTO!"

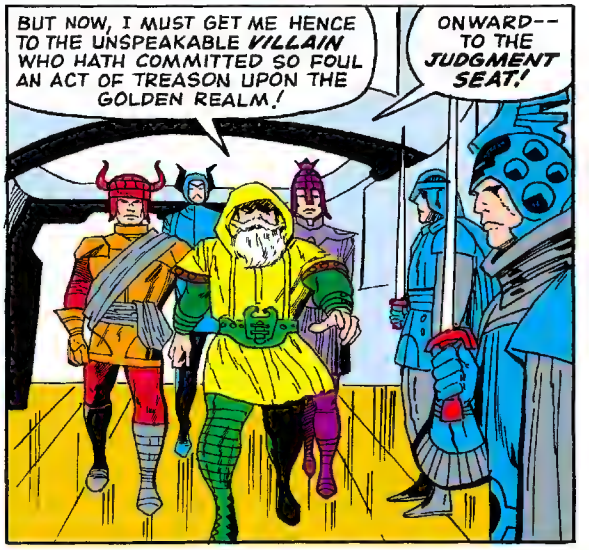
THE MIGHTY THOR!

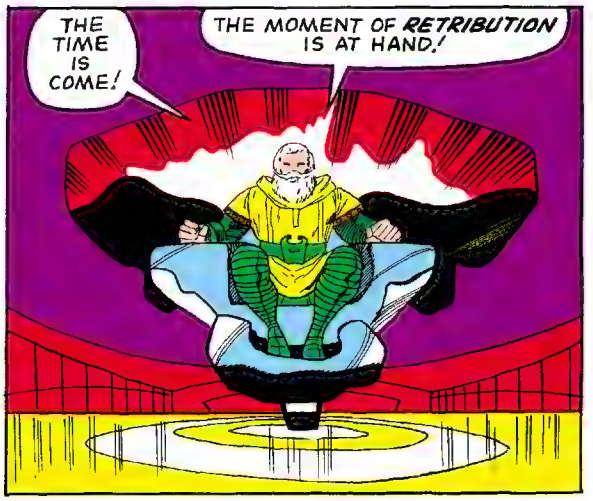
"THE POWER OF PLUTO!"

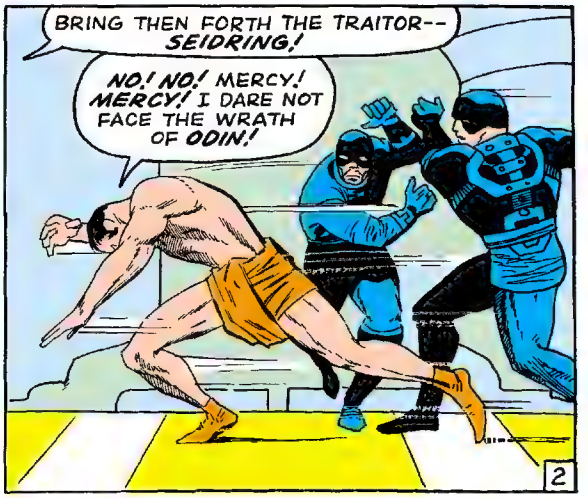

AT LAST, MIGHTY THOR HAS REDEEMED HIMSELF IN THE EYES OF HIS ROYAL FATHER, ODIN, BY DEFEATING THE EVIL SEIDRING! BUT, EVEN A GOD CAN BE INJURED BY BOLTS OF FUNDAMENTAL ENERGY SUCH AS THOSE WHICH THE DESPERATE TRAITOR HAS HURLED AT THE IMMORTAL AVENGER--!
LET SILENCE REIGN! THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH TAKE HIS REST!! BY ORDER OF IMPERIAL ODIN!
HE SLEEPS! 'TIS GOOD! SOON, THE STRENGTH WHICH IS HIS BIRTHRIGHT SHALL RETURN TO YON NOBLE BODY!
CONCEIVED IN GRANDEUR AND PRODUCED IN GLORY, BY:
STAN LEE, WRITER
JACK KIRBY, PENCILLER
VINCE COLLETTA, INKER
ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER
VERILY, WE HAVE SPOKEN!

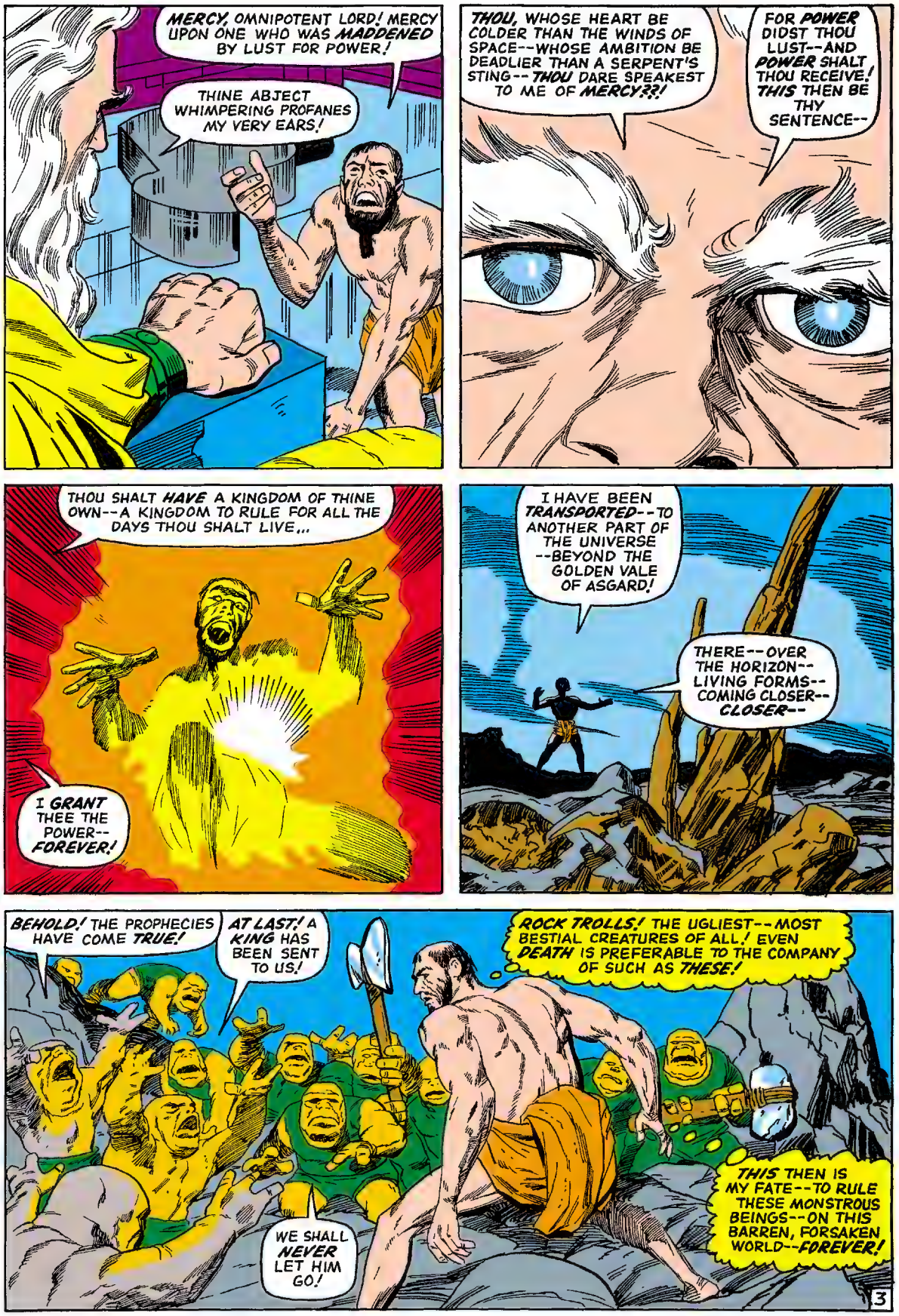

LATER, THE MOST REGAL PRESENCE IN ALL THE CELESTIAL REALM ENTERS THE HEAVILY-GUARDED CHAMBER...
HOW FARES THE SON OF MY HEART, PHYSICIAN?
HE HATH TOTTERED AT THE BRINK OF THE ETERNAL SLEEP, MY LORD ODIN...
...BUT, THE GLOWING STRENGTH OF HIS LIMBS, COUPLED WITH THE MATCHLESS COURAGE OF HIS SPIRIT, SHALL SURELY RESTORE THY PRINCELY OFF-SPRING TO THY BOSOM, SIRE!

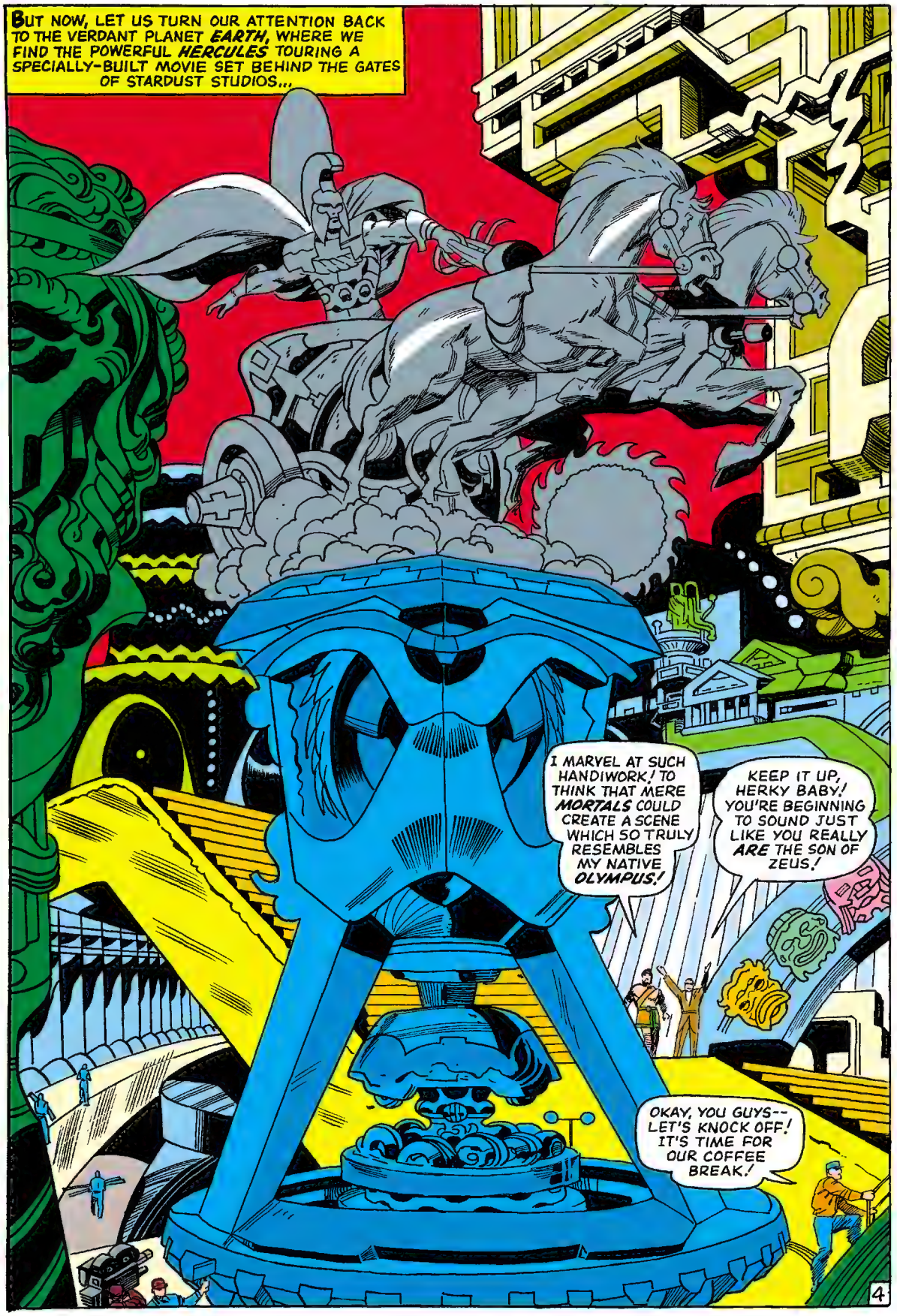

IN A FIT OF ROYAL RAGE, WHICH I SHALL REGRET TILL THE END OF TIME, I DID DEPRIVE HIM OF HALF HIS GODLY POWER!
O, MOST RASH AND SHAMEFUL DEED! UPON THE OPENING OF HIS EYES, THAT POWER SHALL BE RESTORED--AS SURELY AS THE HEAVENS ENDURE!


BUT NOW, I MUST GET ME HENCE TO THE UNSPEAKABLE VILLAIN WHO HATH COMMITTED SO FOUL AN ACT OF TREASON UPON THE GOLDEN REALM!
ONWARD--TO THE JUDGMENT SEAT!

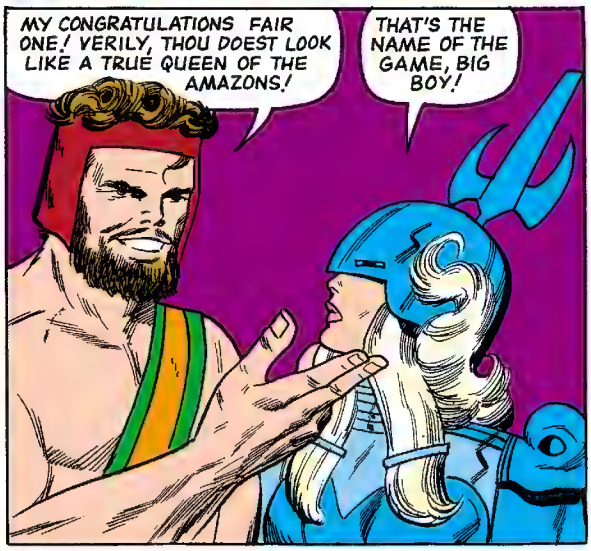

THE TIME IS COME!
THE MOMENT OF RETRIBUTION IS AT HAND!

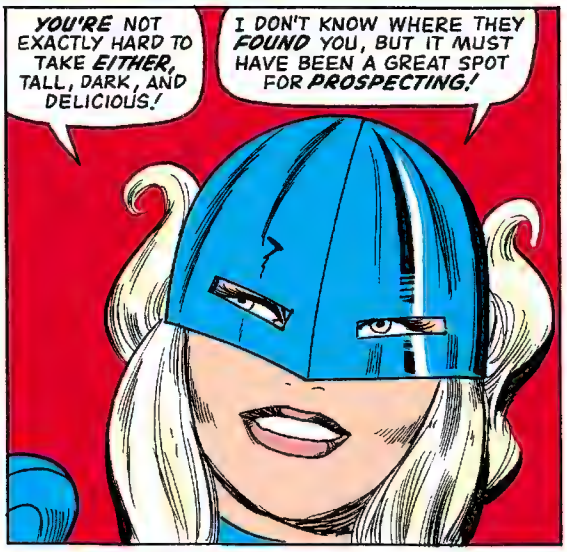

BRING THEN FORTH THE TRAITOR--SEIDRING!
NO! NO! MERCY! MERCY! I DARE NOT FACE THE WRATH OF ODIN!

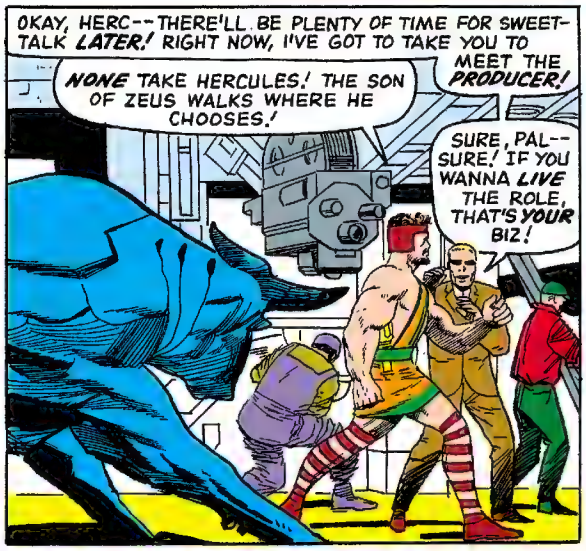

MERCY, OMNIPOTENT LORD! MERCY UPON ONE WHO WAS MADDENED BY LUST FOR POWER!
THINE ABJECT WHIMPERING PROFANES MY VERY EARS!
THOU, WHOSE HEART BE COLDER THAN THE WINDS OF SPACE--WHOSE AMBITION BE DEADLIER THAN A SERPENT'S STING--THOU DARE SPEAKEST TO ME OF MERCY?!?!
FOR POWER DIDST THOU LUST--AND POWER SHALT THOU RECEIVE! THIS THEN BE THY SENTENCE--
THOU SHALT HAVE A KINGDOM OF THINE OWN--A KINGDOM TO RULE FOR ALL THE DAYS THOU SHALT LIVE...
I GRANT THEE THE POWER--FOREVER!
I HAVE BEEN TRANSPORTED--TO ANOTHER PART OF THE UNIVERSE--BEYOND THE GOLDEN VALE OF ASGARD!
THERE--OVER THE HORIZON--LIVING FORMS--COMING CLOSER--CLOSER--
BEHOLD! THE PROPHECIES HAVE COME TRUE!
AT LAST! A KING HAS BEEN SENT TO US!
ROCK TROLLS! THE UGLIEST--MOST BESTIAL CREATURES OF ALL! EVEN DEATH IS PREFERABLE TO THE COMPANY OF SUCH AS THESE!
WE SHALL NEVER LET HIM GO!
THIS THEN IS MY FATE--TO RULE THESE MONSTROUS BEINGS--ON THIS BARREN, FORSAKEN WORLD--FOREVER!
3

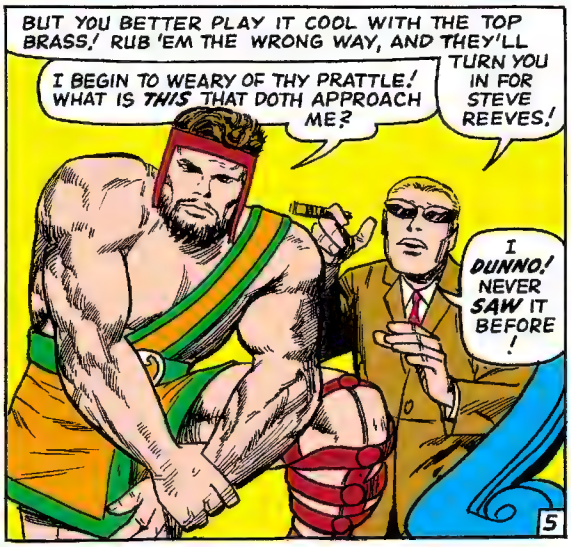

BUT NOW, LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE VERDANT PLANET EARTH, WHERE WE FIND THE POWERFUL HERCULES TOURING A SPECIALLY-BUILT MOVIE SET BEHIND THE GATES OF STARDUST STUDIOS...
I MARVEL AT SUCH HANDIWORK! TO THINK THAT MERE MORTALS COULD CREATE A SCENE WHICH SO TRULY RESEMBLES MY NATIVE OLYMPUS!
KEEP IT UP, HERKY BABY! YOU'RE BEGINNING TO SOUND JUST LIKE YOU REALLY ARE THE SON OF ZEUS!
OKAY, YOU GUYS-- LET'S KNOCK OFF! IT'S TIME FOR OUR COFFEE BREAK!

TO THINK THAT I--THE HERO OF HEROES--SHALL SPEND MY TIME IN PLAY-ACTING FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF MORTALS! WHAT A MONUMENTAL JEST! HOW THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES SHALL ROCK WITH LAUGHTER!
OKAY, HERK--DON'T LET'S OVER-DO THE OLYMPUS BIT, HUH? WE'VE GOT COMPANY NOW!
HERE COMES YOUR LEADING LADY! MAN, TAKE A SQUINT AT THAT GET-UP!

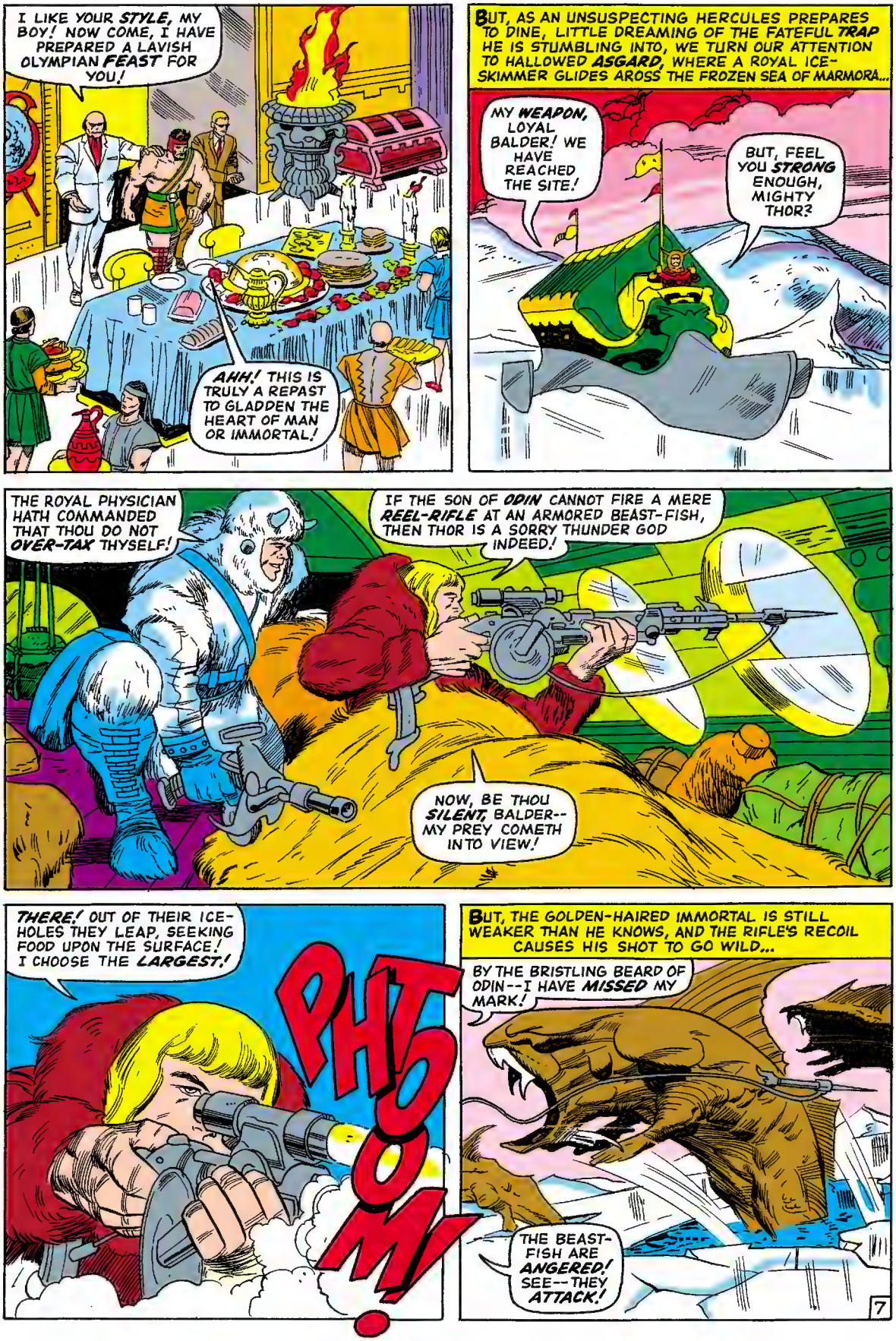

MY CONGRATULATIONS FAIR ONE! VERILY, THOU DOEST LOOK LIKE A TRUE QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS!
THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME, BIG BOY!

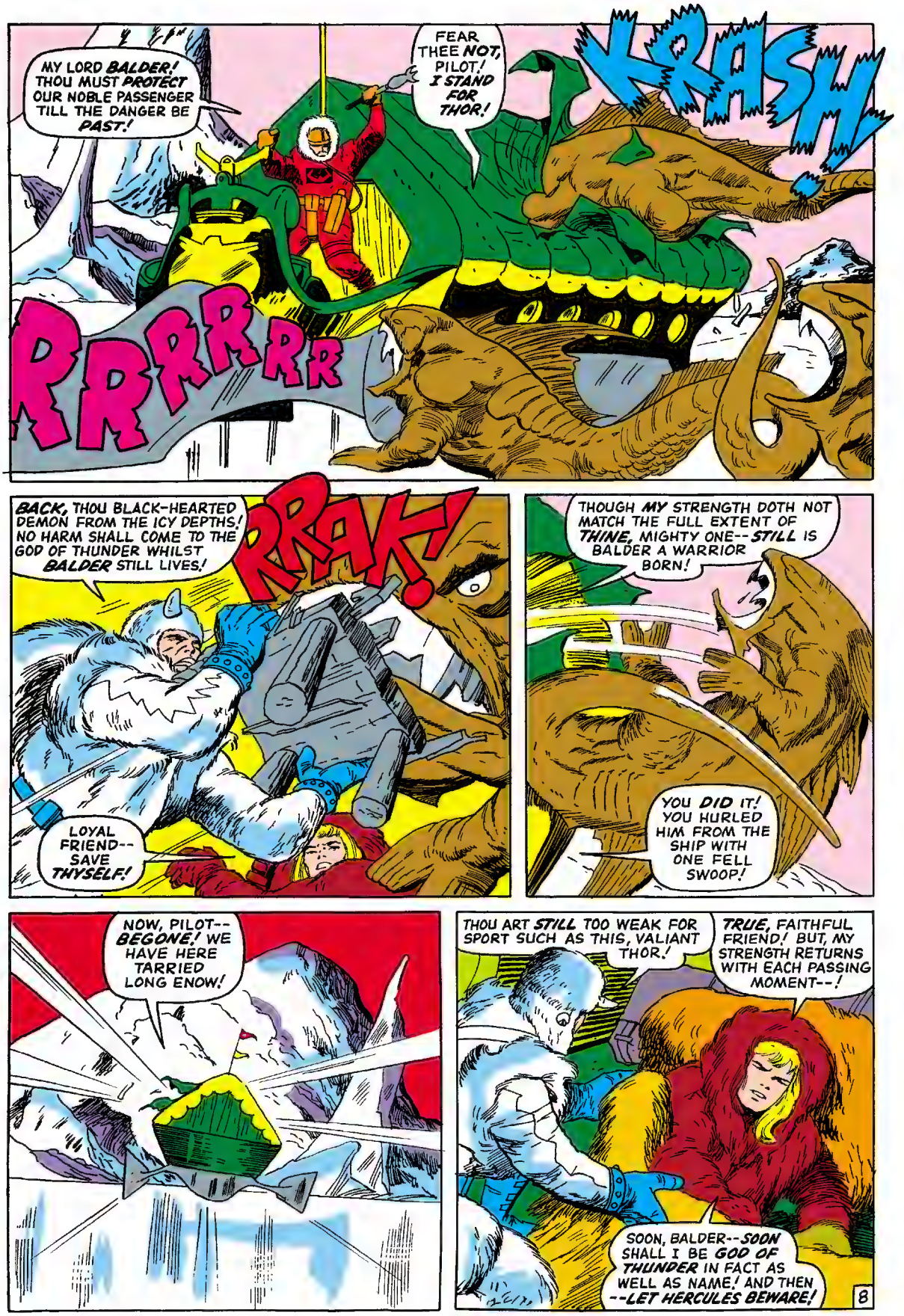

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY HARD TO TAKE EITHER, TALL, DARK, AND DELICIOUS!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY FOUND YOU, BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT SPOT FOR PROSPECTING!

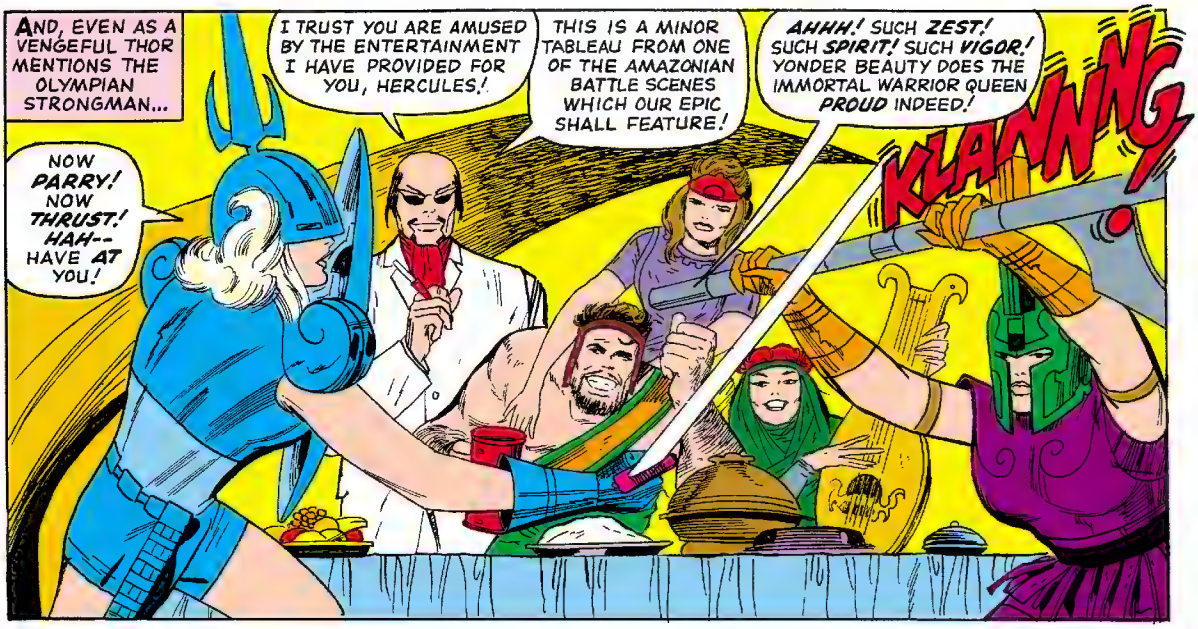

OKAY, HERC--THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR SWEET-TALK LATER! RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT TO TAKE YOU TO MEET THE PRODUCER!
NONE TAKE HERCULES! THE SON OF ZEUS WALKS WHERE HE CHOOSES!
SURE, PAL--SURE! IF YOU WANNA LIVE THE ROLE, THAT'S YOUR BIZ!

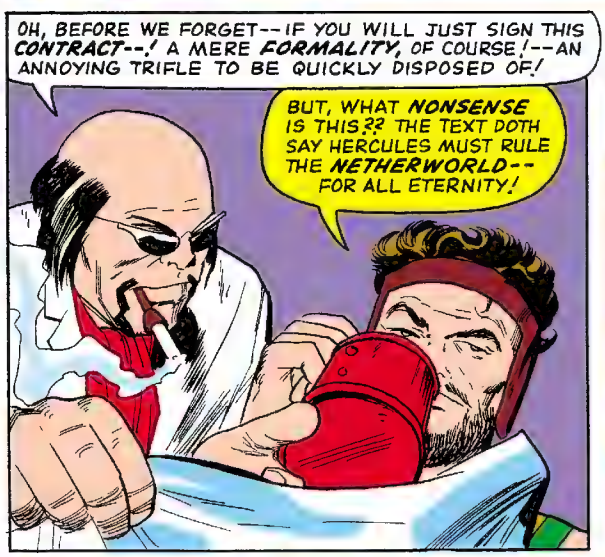

BUT YOU BETTER PLAY IT COOL WITH THE TOP BRASS! RUB 'EM THE WRONG WAY, AND THEY'LL TURN YOU IN FOR STEVE REEVES!
I BEGIN TO WEARY OF THY PRATTLE! WHAT IS THIS THAT DOTH APPROACH ME?
I DUNNO! NEVER SAW IT BEFORE!

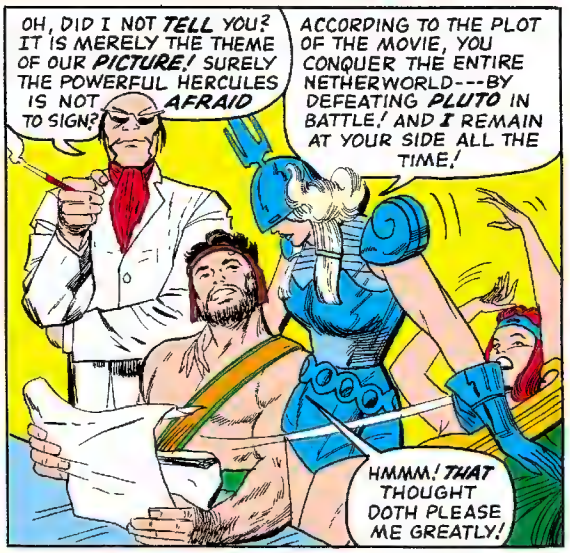
THIS IS YOUR SCREEN TEST, HERCULES! DEFEND YOURSELF!
AHRRR!
I-I'D BETTER GO AND RE-READ THE CONTRACT!
YOUR OPPONENT IS MERELY A MECHANICAL DEVICE, CREATED BY OUR STUDIO TECHNICIANS, TO SEE HOW YOU PHOTOGRAPH IN A FIGHT SCENE!
THOU SHALT GET MORE THAN THOU BARGAINED FOR!
I'LL REND IT ASUNDER WITH BUT A SINGLE BLOW--!
NO! WE HAVE SEEN ENOUGH! THE TEST IS OVER!
A SUDDEN WALL OF LIVING FLAME! TRULY, THY TECHNICIANS ARE MASTERS OF THEIR ART!
INDEED! YOUR ROBOT FOE WAS FAR TOO EXPENSIVE FOR US TO ALLOW YOU TO DAMAGE IT!
YOU ARE ALL I HAVE HEARD YOU ARE! THE ROLE IS YOURS!
I SHALL MAKE YOU THE GREATEST STAR OF ALL TIME! YOUR NAME WILL BECOME A HOUSEHOLD WORD!
KNOW YOU NOT THAT THE NAME HERCULES HATH BEEN HAILED FOR AGES THRUOUT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE?!!

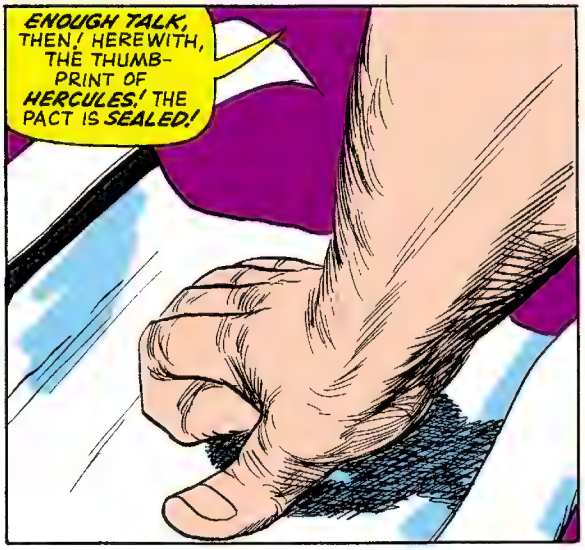

I LIKE YOUR STYLE, MY BOY! NOW COME, I HAVE PREPARED A LAVISH OLYMPIAN FEAST FOR YOU!
AHH! THIS IS TRULY A REPAST TO GLADDEN THE HEART OF MAN OR IMMORTAL!
BUT, AS AN UNSUSPECTING HERCULES PREPARES TO DINE, LITTLE DREAMING OF THE FATEFUL TRAP HE IS STUMBLING INTO, WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO HALLOWED ASGARD, WHERE A ROYAL ICE-SKIMMER GLIDES ACROSS THE FROZEN SEA OF MARMORA...
MY WEAPON, LOYAL BALDER! WE HAVE REACHED THE SITE!
BUT, FEEL YOU STRONG ENOUGH, MIGHTY THOR?
THE ROYAL PHYSICIAN HATH COMMANDED THAT THOU DO NOT OVER-TAX THYSELF!
IF THE SON OF ODIN CANNOT FIRE A MERE REEL-RIFLE AT AN ARMORED BEAST-FISH, THEN THOR IS A SORRY THUNDER GOD INDEED!
NOW, BE THOU SILENT, BALDER-- MY PREY COMETH INTO VIEW!
THERE! OUT OF THEIR ICE-HOLES THEY LEAP, SEEKING FOOD UPON THE SURFACE! I CHOOSE THE LARGEST!
PHOOM!
BUT, THE GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL IS STILL WEAKER THAN HE KNOWS, AND THE RIFLE'S RECOIL CAUSES HIS SHOT TO GO WILD...
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN--I HAVE MISSED MY MARK!
THE BEAST-FISH ARE ANGERED! SEE--THEY ATTACK!
7

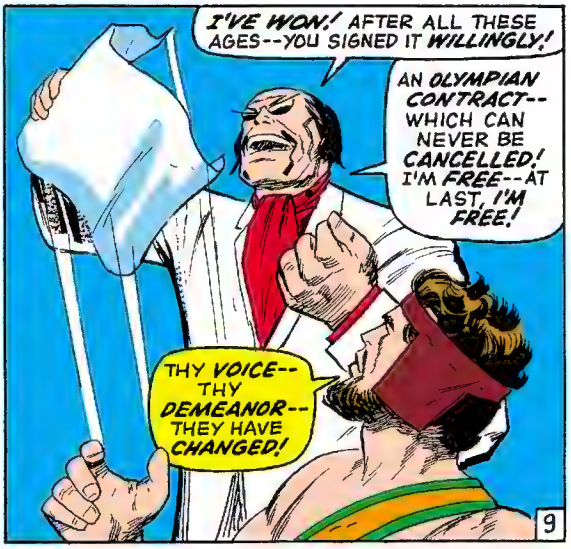

MY LORD BALDER! THOU MUST PROTECT OUR NOBLE PASSENGER TILL THE DANGER BE PAST!
FEAR THEE NOT, PILOT! I STAND FOR THOR!
KRASH
RRRRRR
BACK, THOU BLACK-HEARTED DEMON FROM THE ICY DEPTHS! NO HARM SHALL COME TO THE GOD OF THUNDER WHILST BALDER STILL LIVES!
RRAK!
LOYAL FRIEND-- SAVE THYSELF!
THOUGH MY STRENGTH DOTH NOT MATCH THE FULL EXTENT OF THINE, MIGHTY ONE-- STILL IS BALDER A WARRIOR BORN!
YOU DID IT! YOU HURLED HIM FROM THE SHIP WITH ONE FELL SWOOP!
NOW, PILOT-- BEGONE! WE HAVE HERE TARRIED LONG ENOW!
THOU ART STILL TOO WEAK FOR SPORT SUCH AS THIS, VALIANT THOR!
TRUE, FAITHFUL FRIEND! BUT, MY STRENGTH RETURNS WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT--!
SOON, BALDER--SOON SHALL I BE GOD OF THUNDER IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME! AND THEN --LET HERCULES BEWARE!
8

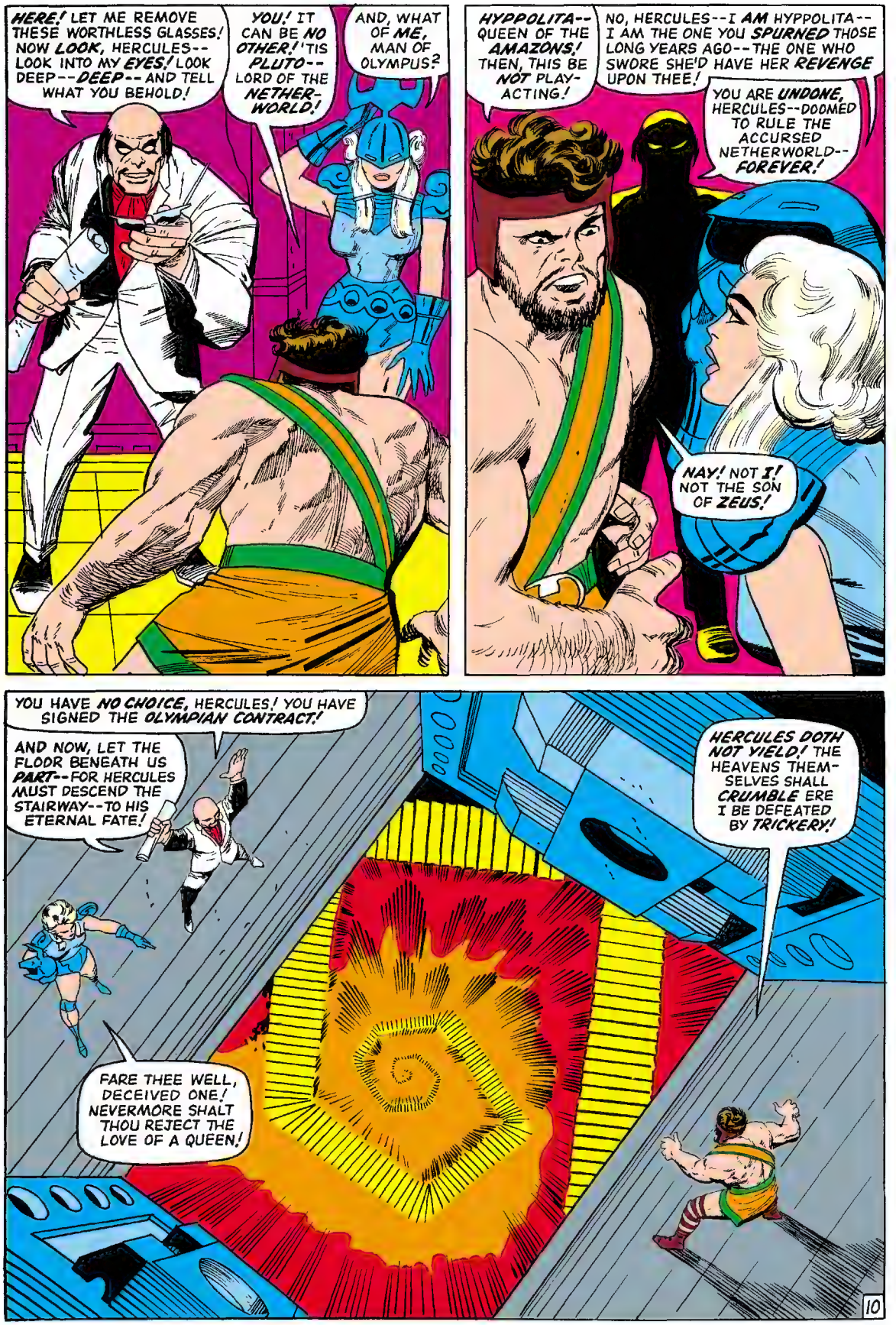

AND, EVEN AS A VENGEFUL THOR MENTIONS THE OLYMPIAN STRONGMAN...
I TRUST YOU ARE AMUSED BY THE ENTERTAINMENT I HAVE PROVIDED FOR YOU, HERCULES!
THIS IS A MINOR TABLEAU FROM ONE OF THE AMAZONIAN BATTLE SCENES WHICH OUR EPIC SHALL FEATURE!
AHHH! SUCH ZEST! SUCH SPIRIT! SUCH VIGOR! YONDER BEAUTY DOES THE IMMORTAL WARRIOR QUEEN PROUD INDEED!
KLANNNG
NOW PARRY! NOW THRUST! HAH--HAVE AT YOU!

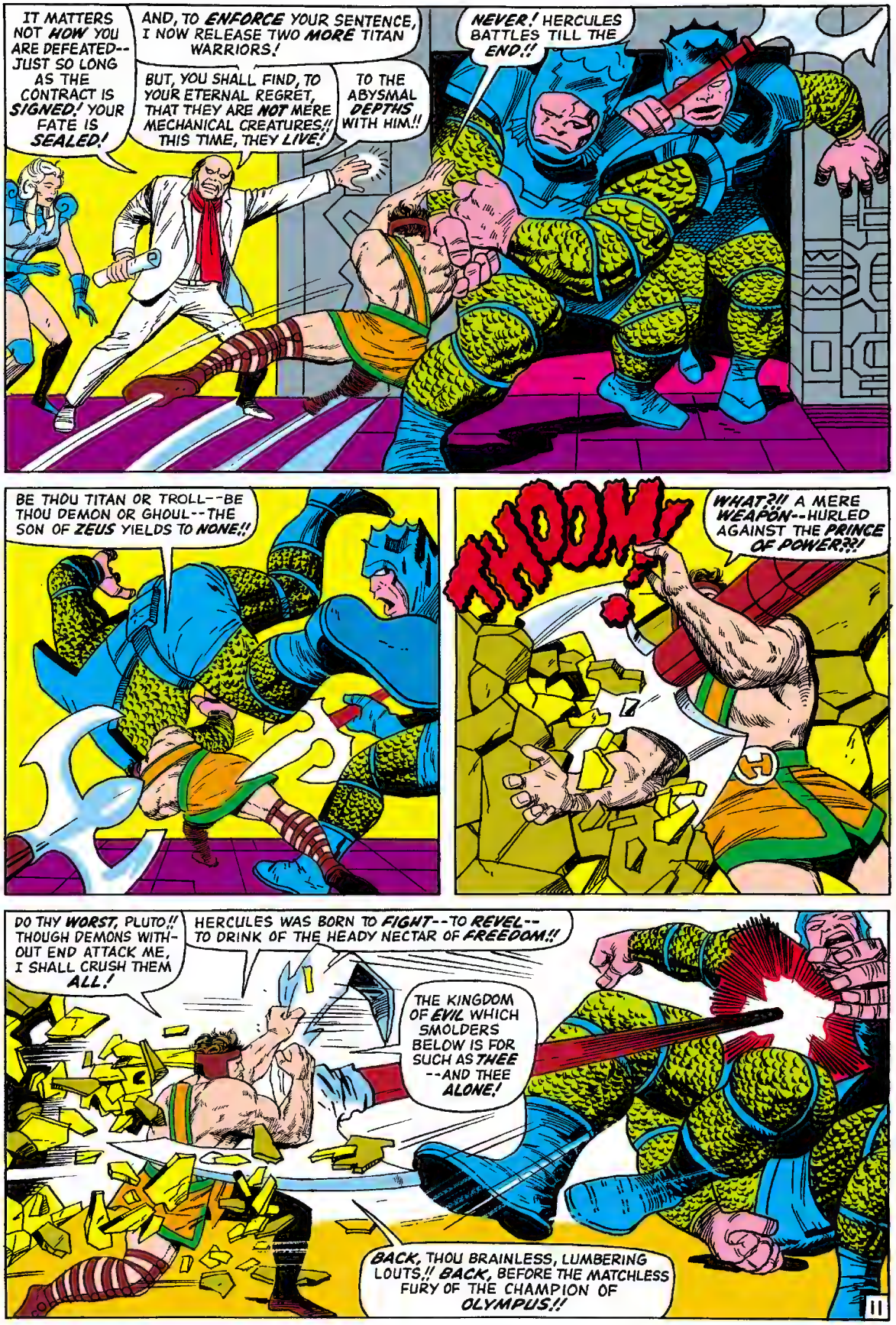

OH, BEFORE WE FORGET--IF YOU WILL JUST SIGN THIS CONTRACT--! A MERE FORMALITY, OF COURSE!--AN ANNOYING TRIFLE TO BE QUICKLY DISPOSED OF!
BUT, WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS?? THE TEXT DOTH SAY HERCULES MUST RULE THE NETHERWORLD--FOR ALL ETERNITY!


OH, DID I NOT TELL YOU? IT IS MERELY THE THEME OF OUR PICTURE! SURELY THE POWERFUL HERCULES IS NOT AFRAID TO SIGN?
ACCORDING TO THE PLOT OF THE MOVIE, YOU CONQUER THE ENTIRE NETHERWORLD---BY DEFEATING PLUTO IN BATTLE! AND I REMAIN AT YOUR SIDE ALL THE TIME!
HMMM! THAT THOUGHT DOTH PLEASE ME GREATLY!


ENOUGH TALK, THEN! HEREWITH, THE THUMB-PRINT OF HERCULES! THE PACT IS SEALED!

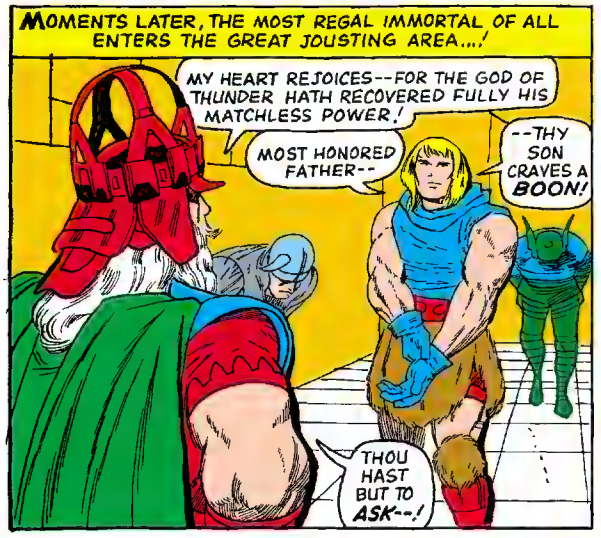

I'VE WON! AFTER ALL THESE AGES--YOU SIGNED IT WILLINGLY!
AN OLYMPIAN CONTRACT--WHICH CAN NEVER BE CANCELLED! I'M FREE--AT LAST, I'M FREE!
THY VOICE--THY DEMEANOR--THEY HAVE CHANGED!

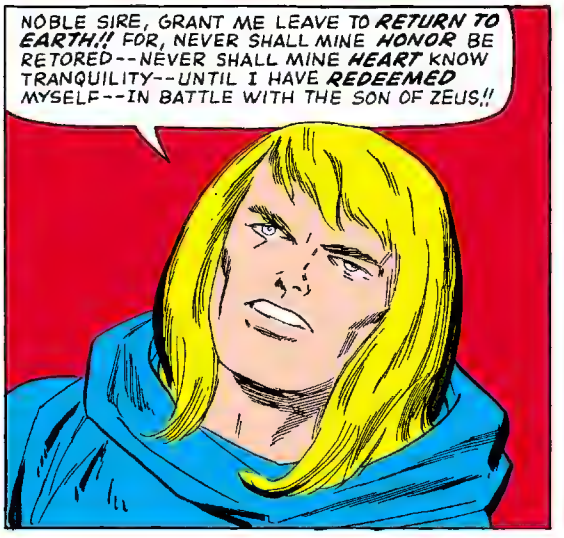

HERE! LET ME REMOVE THESE WORTHLESS GLASSES! NOW LOOK, HERCULES--LOOK INTO MY EYES! LOOK DEEP--DEEP--AND TELL WHAT YOU BEHOLD!
YOU! IT CAN BE NO OTHER! 'TIS PLUTO--LORD OF THE NETHER-WORLD!
AND, WHAT OF ME, MAN OF OLYMPUS?
HYPPOLITA--QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS! THEN, THIS BE NOT PLAY-ACTING!
NO, HERCULES--I AM HYPPOLITA--I AM THE ONE YOU SPURNED THOSE LONG YEARS AGO--THE ONE WHO SWORE SHE'D HAVE HER REVENGE UPON THEE!
YOU ARE UNDONE, HERCULES--DOOMED TO RULE THE ACCURSED NETHERWORLD--FOREVER!
NAY! NOT I! NOT THE SON OF ZEUS!
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE, HERCULES! YOU HAVE SIGNED THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT!
AND NOW, LET THE FLOOR BENEATH US PART--FOR HERCULES MUST DESCEND THE STAIRWAY--TO HIS ETERNAL FATE!
HERCULES DOTH NOT YIELD! THE HEAVENS THEM-SELVES SHALL CRUMBLE ERE I BE DEFEATED BY TRICKERY!
FARE THEE WELL, DECEIVED ONE! NEVERMORE SHALT THOU REJECT THE LOVE OF A QUEEN!
10

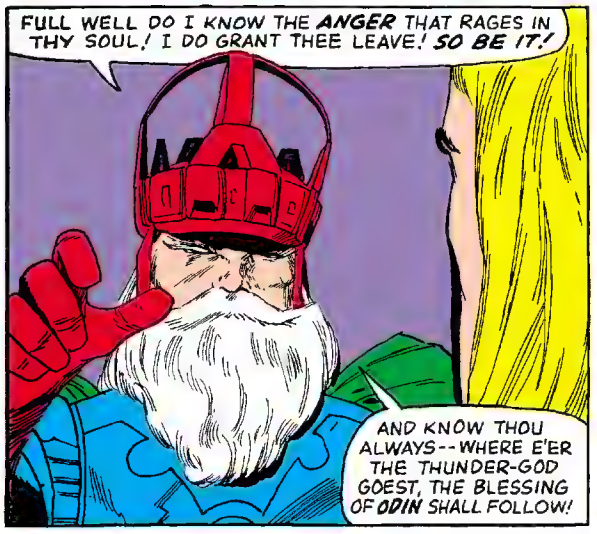

IT MATTERS NOT HOW YOU ARE DEFEATED--JUST SO LONG AS THE CONTRACT IS SIGNED! YOUR FATE IS SEALED!
AND, TO ENFORCE YOUR SENTENCE, I NOW RELEASE TWO MORE TITAN WARRIORS!
BUT, YOU SHALL FIND, TO YOUR ETERNAL REGRET, THAT THEY ARE NOT MERE MECHANICAL CREATURES!! THIS TIME, THEY LIVE!
TO THE ABYSMAL DEPTHS WITH HIM!!
NEVER! HERCULES BATTLES TILL THE END!!
BE THOU TITAN OR TROLL--BE THOU DEMON OR GHOUL--THE SON OF ZEUS YIELDS TO NONE!!
THOOM!
WHAT?!! A MERE WEAPON--HURLED AGAINST THE PRINCE OF POWER?!!
DO THY WORST, PLUTO!! THOUGH DEMONS WITHOUT END ATTACK ME, I SHALL CRUSH THEM ALL!
HERCULES WAS BORN TO FIGHT--TO REVEL--TO DRINK OF THE HEADY NECTAR OF FREEDOM!!
THE KINGDOM OF EVIL WHICH SMOLDERS BELOW IS FOR SUCH AS THEE --AND THEE ALONE!
BACK, THOU BRAINLESS, LUMBERING LOUTS,!! BACK, BEFORE THE MATCHLESS FURY OF THE CHAMPION OF OLYMPUS!!

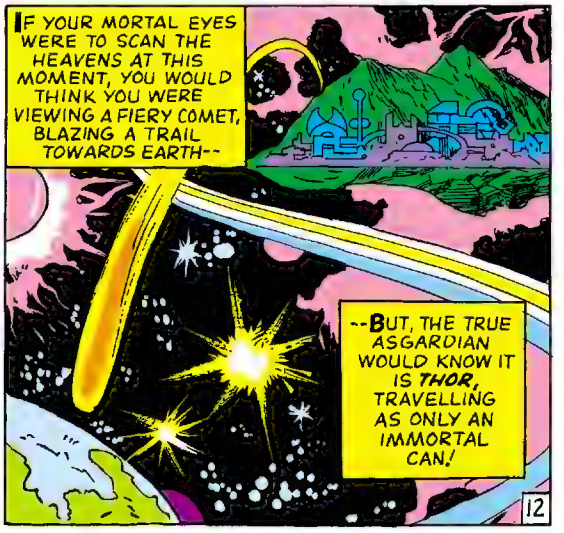
MEANWHILE, IN GLITTERING ASGARD, MIGHTY THOR JOUSTS LIKE A MASTER, AS HIS STRENGTH RETURNS WITH EVER-INCREASING SPEED--
HAVE AT THEE, VALIANT VOLSTAGG!! LOOK TO THY DEFENSES!
SURELY THOU SPEAKEST IN JEST, THUNDER GOD!
VOLSTAGG IS A ROCK --A MOUNTAIN --WHICH NONE CAN TOPPLE!

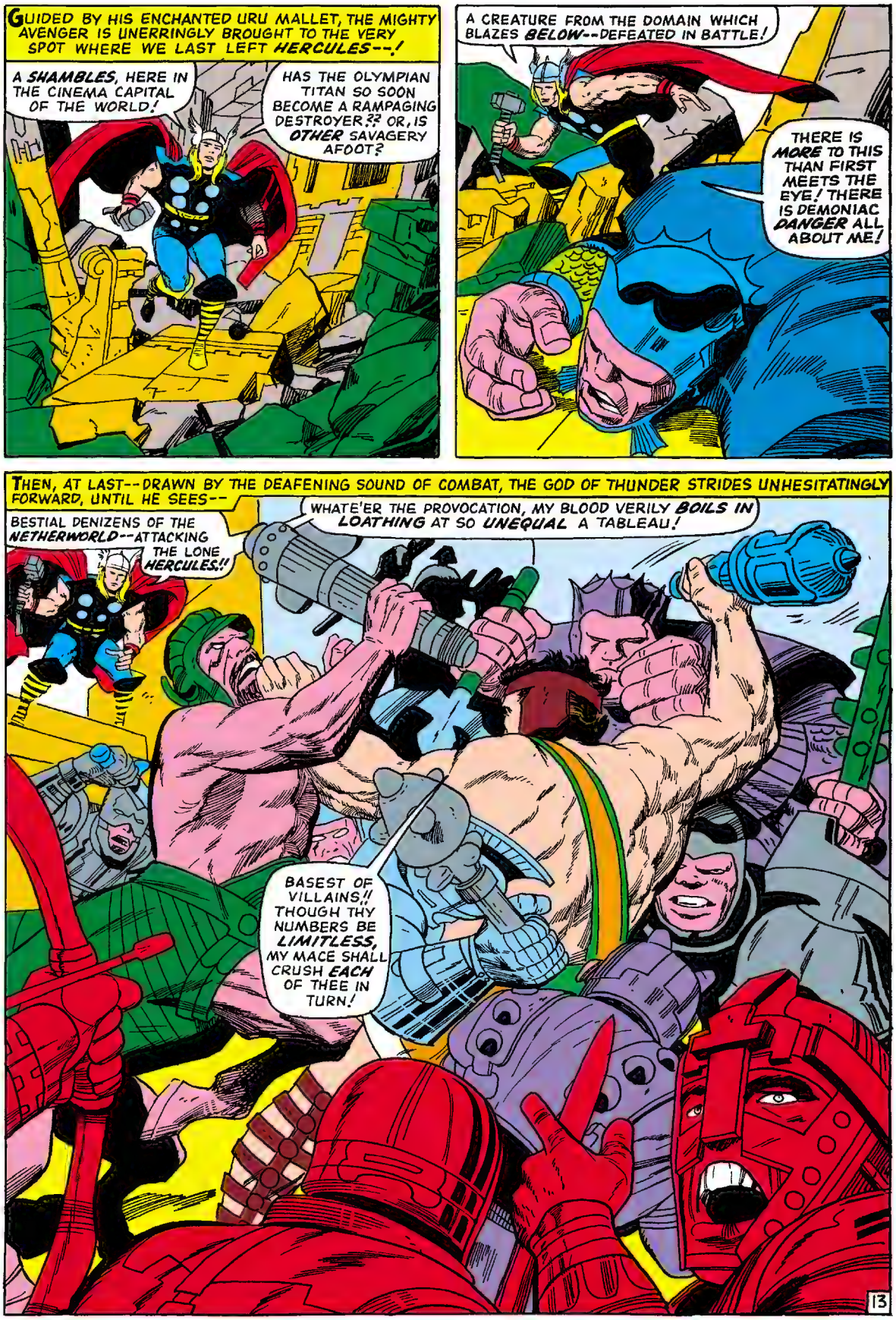
THEN TRULY, A MIRACLE IS NOW UPON US--!
THOR HATH MOVED A MOUNTAIN!
O INFAMOUS MOMENT! WHO WILL E'ER BELIEVE SO IMPOSSIBLE AN EVENT??! WHO WILL-- -GLUGGG!-
KRUNK!


MOMENTS LATER, THE MOST REGAL IMMORTAL OF ALL ENTERS THE GREAT JOUSTING AREA....!
MY HEART REJOICES--FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER HATH RECOVERED FULLY HIS MATCHLESS POWER!
MOST HONORED FATHER--
--THY SON CRAVES A BOON!
THOU HAST BUT TO ASK--!


NOBLE SIRE, GRANT ME LEAVE TO RETURN TO EARTH!! FOR, NEVER SHALL MINE HONOR BE RETORED--NEVER SHALL MINE HEART KNOW TRANQUILITY--UNTIL I HAVE REDEEMED MYSELF--IN BATTLE WITH THE SON OF ZEUS!!

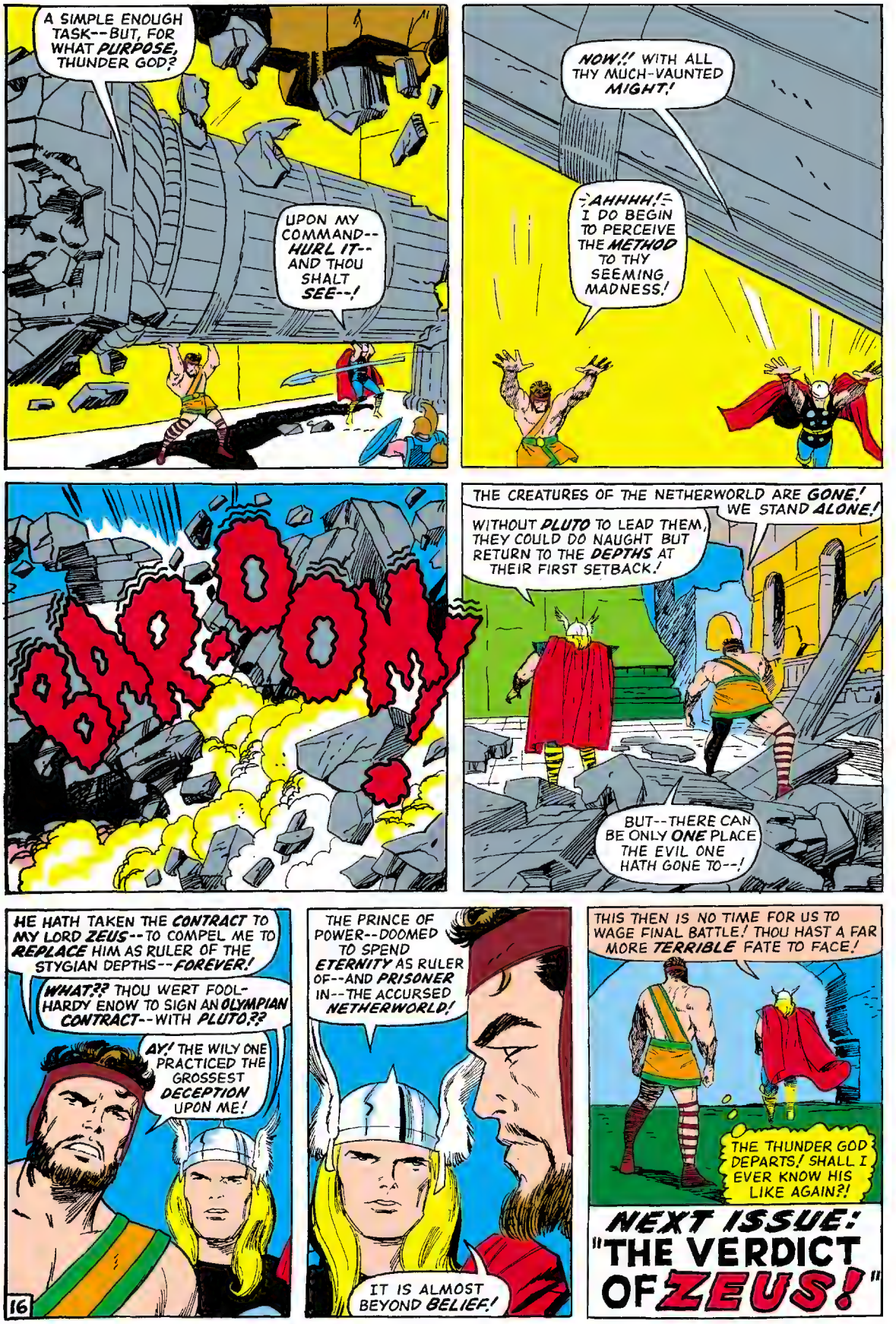

FULL WELL DO I KNOW THE ANGER THAT RAGES IN THY SOUL! I DO GRANT THEE LEAVE! SO BE IT!
AND KNOW THOU ALWAYS--WHERE E'ER THE THUNDER-GOD GOEST, THE BLESSING OF ODIN SHALL FOLLOW!


IF YOUR MORTAL EYES WERE TO SCAN THE HEAVENS AT THIS MOMENT, YOU WOULD THINK YOU WERE VIEWING A FIERY COMET, BLAZING A TRAIL TOWARDS EARTH--
--BUT, THE TRUE ASGARDIAN WOULD KNOW IT IS THOR, TRAVELLING AS ONLY AN IMMORTAL CAN!


GUIDED BY HIS ENCHANTED URU MALLET, THE MIGHTY AVENGER IS UNERRINGLY BROUGHT TO THE VERY SPOT WHERE WE LAST LEFT HERCULES--!
A SHAMBLES, HERE IN THE CINEMA CAPITAL OF THE WORLD!
HAS THE OLYMPIAN TITAN SO SOON BECOME A RAMPAGING DESTROYER?? OR, IS OTHER SAVAGERY AFOOT?
A CREATURE FROM THE DOMAIN WHICH BLAZES BELOW--DEFEATED IN BATTLE!
THERE IS MORE TO THIS THAN FIRST MEETS THE EYE! THERE IS DEMONIAC DANGER ALL ABOUT ME!
THEN, AT LAST--DRAWN BY THE DEAFENING SOUND OF COMBAT, THE GOD OF THUNDER STRIDES UNHESITATINGLY FORWARD, UNTIL HE SEES--
BESTIAL DENIZENS OF THE NETHERWORLD--ATTACKING THE LONE HERCULES!!
WHATE'ER THE PROVOCATION, MY BLOOD VERILY BOILS IN LOATHING AT SO UNEQUAL A TABLEAU!
BASEST OF VILLAINS!! THOUGH THY NUMBERS BE LIMITLESS, MY MACE SHALL CRUSH EACH OF THEE IN TURN!

NO LONGER NEED HERCULES BATTLE ALONE!!
THOSE WHO ATTACK IN COWARDLY NUMBER SHALL ALSO FACE THE FURY OF THE THUNDERING HAMMER OF THOR!
THE THUNDER GOD!! STAY BACK, ASGARDIAN!! THOU HAST NOT THE MIGHT TO DEAL WITH SUCH AS THESE!!
NEVERMORE SHALT THOU UTTER SUCH STINGING WORDS, OLYMPIAN!
BEHOLD, RASH BRAGGART-- BEHOLD THE TRUE POWER OF THE SON OF ODIN!!
THY STRENGTH-- THY VALOR-- THEY ARE WORTHY OF HERCULES, HIMSELF!!
WHY DIDST THOU NOT BATTLE IN SUCH MANNER WHEN LAST WE FOUGHT??
TIME ENOW FOR TALK AFTER OUR TASK HERE BE DONE!
LET US END THIS CHARADE WITH GREATEST SPEED--FOR THERE IS A GREATER SCORE TO BE SETTLED BETWEEN OURSELVES!
BY MY BEARD, I UNDERSTAND THEE NOT, THUNDER GOD!!
BUT, IT SHALL BE EVEN AS THOU SAYEST!

AND, AS THE CYCLONIC BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE, UNABATED--
OUR WARRIORS FALL BACK!!
LET THE STINGING SWORD OF HYPPOLITA BE ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER!
NO! STAND ASIDE! THE NEWLY-ARRIVED GOD OF THUNDER IS A FORCE I HAD NOT CONJURED WITH!
THROK!
THE FINAL VICTORY MUST BE MINE!! HERCULES HAS INDEED AFFIXED HIS MARK TO AN OLYMPIAN CONTRACT!
THEREFORE, WE SHALL TAKE OUR CASE TO THE ONE BEING WHO CAN FORCE THE PRINCE OF POWER TO OBEY!
BE THEN PREPARED, AMAZON QUEEN--!
WE NOW EMBARK UPON THE GREATEST JOURNEY OF ALL--WE GO TO FABLED OLYMPUS--TO CONFRONT THE AWESOME ZEUS, HIMSELF!
LET THE IMMORTAL PRINCES FIGHT ON--THEIR CAUSE IS DOOMED TO FAIL!
WITH ALL THE DARK POWER OF THE NETHERWORLD AT MY DISPOSAL, THE VICTOR CAN BE NONE BUT--PLUTO!
AND NOW, LET US BEGONE--!!
DIDST THOU OBSERVE, ASGARDIAN?? THE EVIL ONE AND HIS HANDMAIDEN HAVE VANISHED!
THE TRIUMPH IS MINE!
NOT UNTIL THOU HAST DEALT WITH ME, BLUSTERING ONE!
BUT FIRST--CATCH THOU THIS PILLAR AS IT FALLS!!
FTOOM!

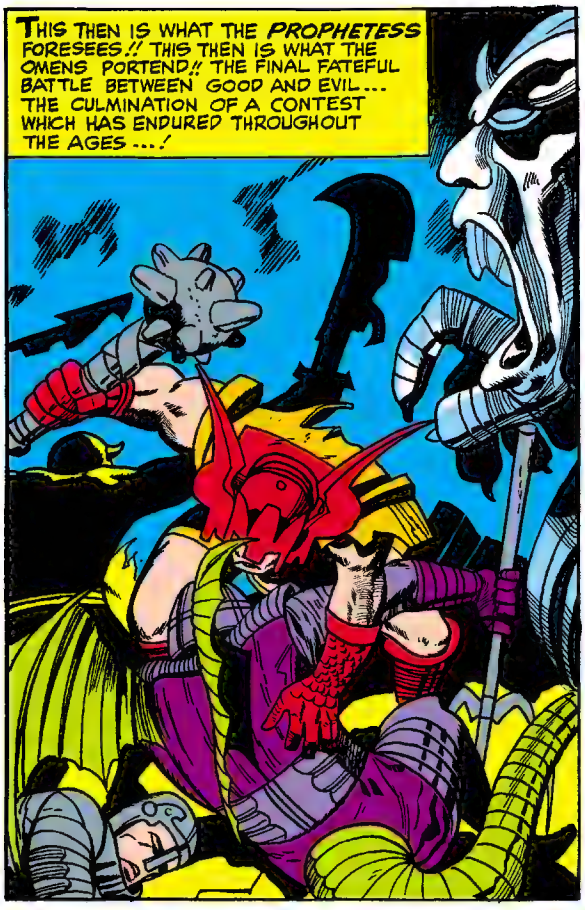

A SIMPLE ENOUGH TASK--BUT, FOR WHAT PURPOSE, THUNDER GOD?
UPON MY COMMAND--HURL IT--AND THOU SHALT SEE--!
NOW!! WITH ALL THY MUCH-VAUNTED MIGHT!
-AHHHH!- I DO BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THE METHOD TO THY SEEMING MADNESS!
BA-DOOM!
THE CREATURES OF THE NETHERWORLD ARE GONE! WE STAND ALONE!
WITHOUT PLUTO TO LEAD THEM, THEY COULD DO NAUGHT BUT RETURN TO THE DEPTHS AT THEIR FIRST SETBACK!
BUT--THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE PLACE THE EVIL ONE HATH GONE TO--!
HE HATH TAKEN THE CONTRACT TO MY LORD ZEUS--TO COMPEL ME TO REPLACE HIM AS RULER OF THE STYGIAN DEPTHS--FOREVER!
WHAT?? THOU WERT FOOLHARDY ENOW TO SIGN AN OLYMPIAN CONTRACT--WITH PLUTO??
AY! THE WILY ONE PRACTICED THE GROSSEST DECEPTION UPON ME!
16
THE PRINCE OF POWER--DOOMED TO SPEND ETERNITY AS RULER OF--AND PRISONER IN--THE ACCURSED NETHERWORLD!
IT IS ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF!
THIS THEN IS NO TIME FOR US TO WAGE FINAL BATTLE! THOU HAST A FAR MORE TERRIBLE FATE TO FACE!
THE THUNDER GOD DEPARTS! SHALL I EVER KNOW HIS LIKE AGAIN?!
NEXT ISSUE:
"THE VERDICT OF ZEUS!"

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS

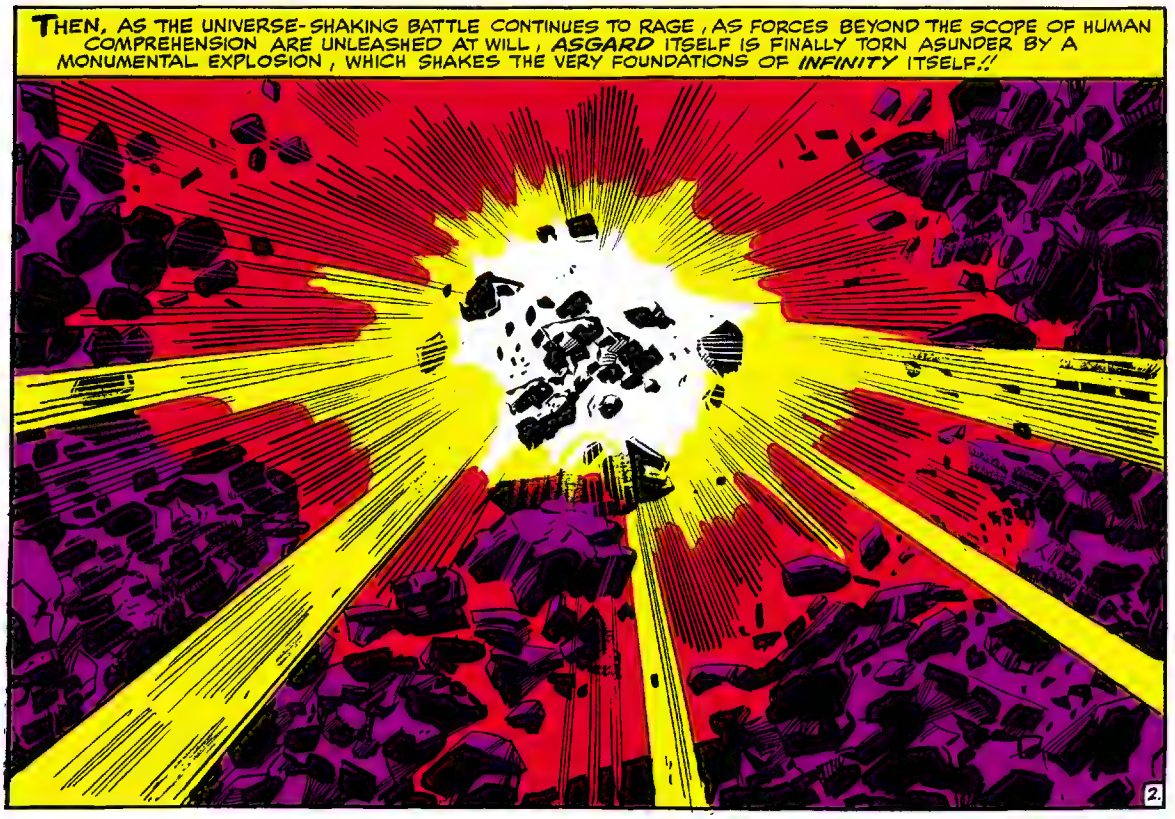
"AFTERMATH!"

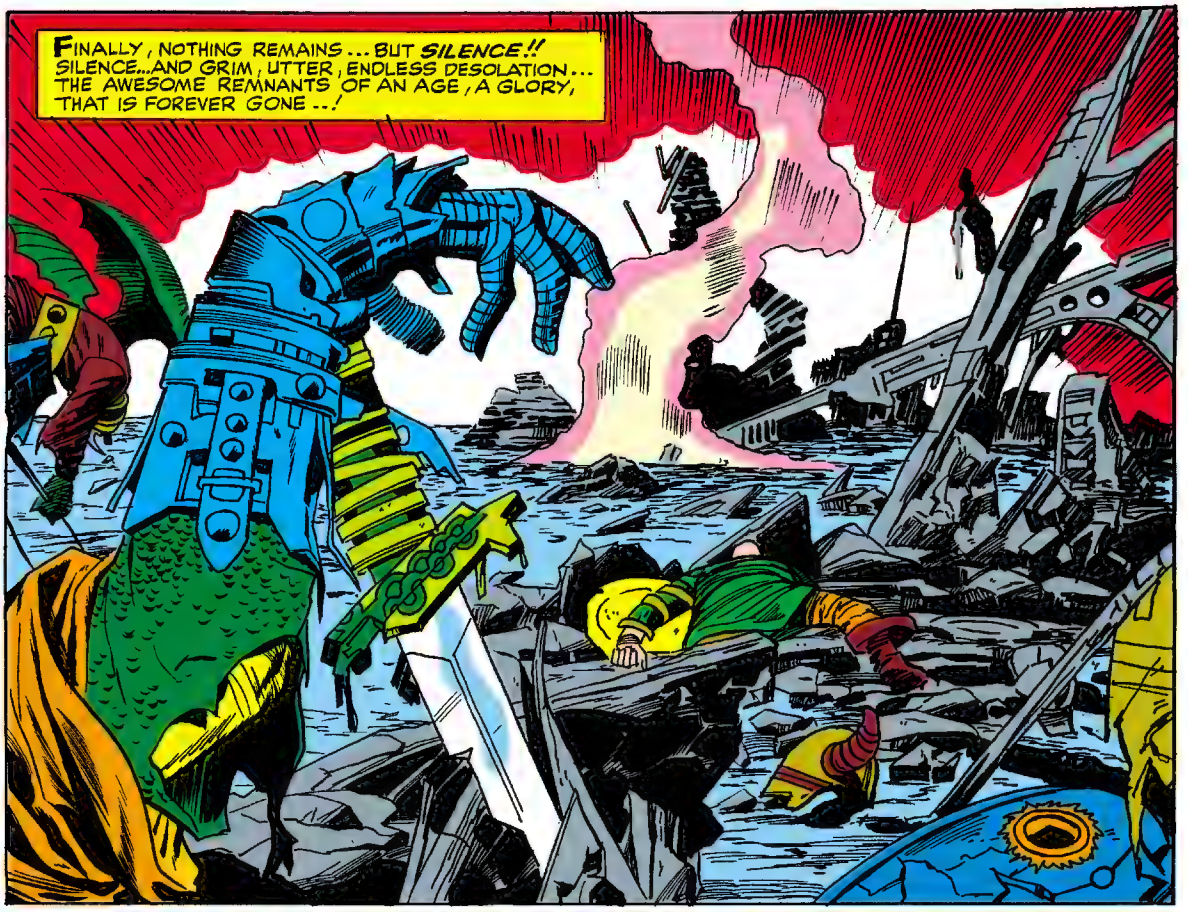
SCRIPT: STAN LEE | PENCILLING: JACK KIRBY | DELINEATION: VINCE COLLETTA | LETTERING: S. ROSEN

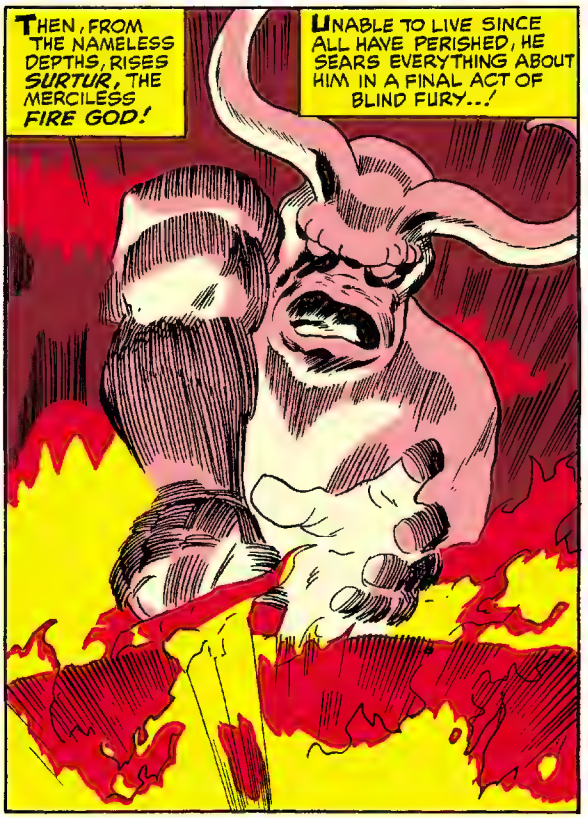
ACCORDING TO VOLLA, THE PROPHETESS, THE DAY OF RAGNAROK IS ALMOST AT HAND! RAGNAROK---THE END OF THE WORLD!! EVEN AS VOLLA SPEAKS, THE ASSEMBLED GODS WITNESS, IN THEIR IMAGINATION, THE LAST AGONIZING MOMENTS OF ASGARD, AS SHE PREDICTS THE GOLDEN REALM BEING WRACKED BY FIRE, FLOOD, AND THE FLAMES OF BATTLE..!


THIS THEN IS WHAT THE PROPHETESS FORESEES!! THIS THEN IS WHAT THE OMENS PORTEND!! THE FINAL FATEFUL BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL... THE CULMINATION OF A CONTEST WHICH HAS ENDURED THROUGHOUT THE AGES ...!

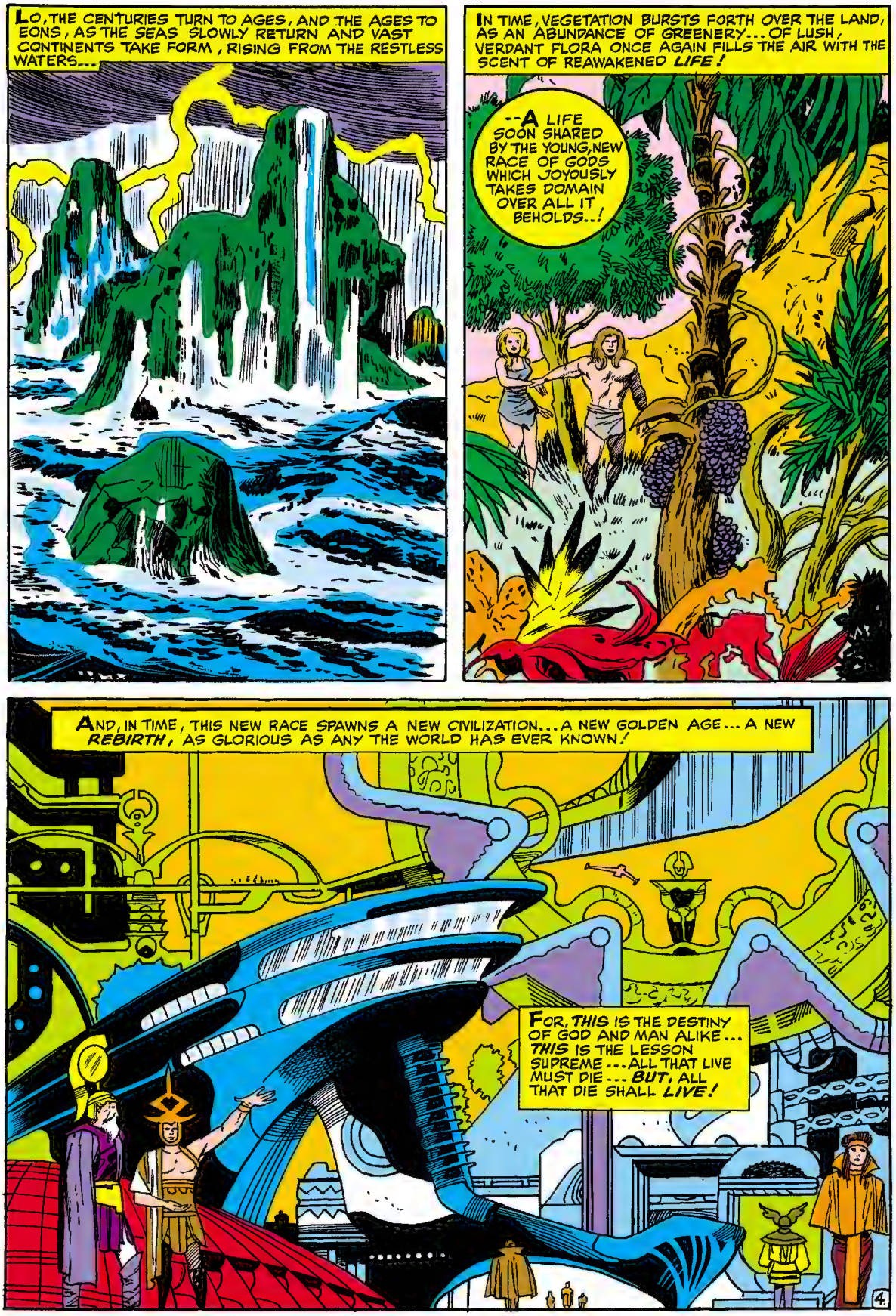
AND, IN THE VANGUARD OF THAT CATACLYSMIC STRUGGLE..LEADING THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCES OF EVIL...IS THE MIDGARD SERPENT, WHOSE STAGGERING SIZE BEGGARS HUMAN DESCRIPTION..!

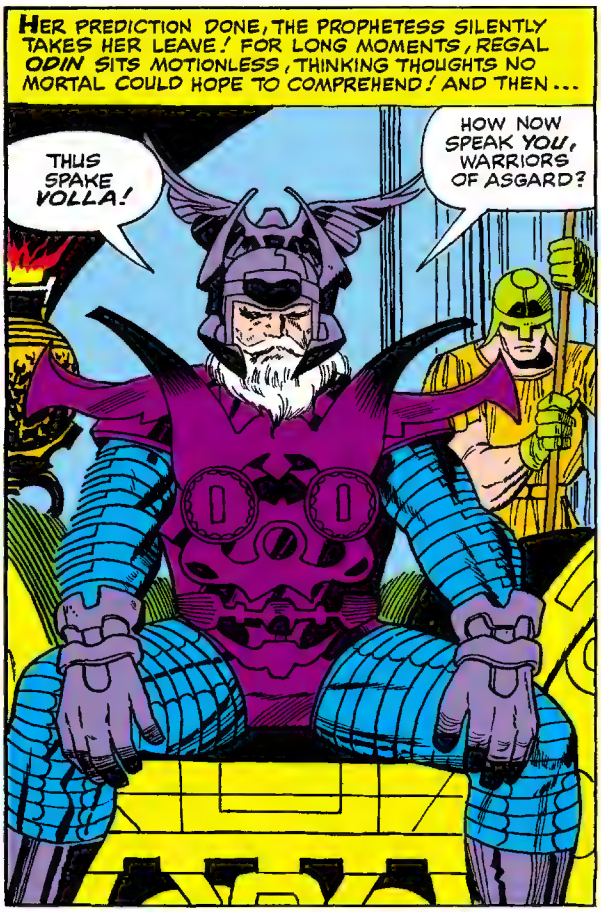

THEN, AS THE UNIVERSE-SHAKING BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE, AS FORCES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF HUMAN COMPREHENSION ARE UNLEASHED AT WILL, ASGARD ITSELF IS FINALLY TORN ASUNDER BY A MONUMENTAL EXPLOSION, WHICH SHAKES THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF INFINITY ITSELF!!
2.

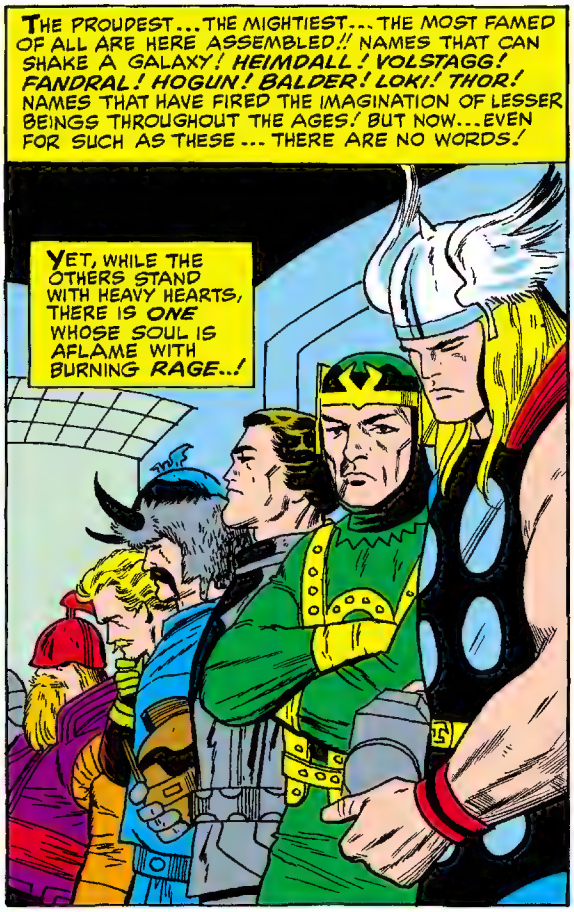

FINALLY, NOTHING REMAINS ... BUT SILENCE!! SILENCE...AND GRIM, UTTER, ENDLESS DESOLATION... THE AWESOME REMNANTS OF AN AGE, A GLORY, THAT IS FOREVER GONE ..!


THEN, FROM THE NAMELESS DEPTHS, RISES SURTUR, THE MERCILESS FIRE GOD!
UNABLE TO LIVE SINCE ALL HAVE PERISHED, HE SEARS EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM IN A FINAL ACT OF BLIND FURY..!

UNTIL, AT LAST, NAUGHT REMAINS OF ASGARD BUT A CHARRED, SMOKING MASS... A CELESTIAL CINDER WHICH SHALL SMOLDER AND GLOW WHILE THE LONG YEARS PASS---
3.


LO, THE CENTURIES TURN TO AGES, AND THE AGES TO EONS, AS THE SEAS SLOWLY RETURN AND VAST CONTINENTS TAKE FORM, RISING FROM THE RESTLESS WATERS...
IN TIME, VEGETATION BURSTS FORTH OVER THE LAND, AS AN ABUNDANCE OF GREENERY... OF LUSH, VERDANT FLORA ONCE AGAIN FILLS THE AIR WITH THE SCENT OF REAWAKENED LIFE!
--A LIFE SOON SHARED BY THE YOUNG, NEW RACE OF GODS WHICH JOYOUSLY TAKES DOMAIN OVER ALL IT BEHOLDS..!
AND, IN TIME, THIS NEW RACE SPAWNS A NEW CIVILIZATION... A NEW GOLDEN AGE... A NEW REBIRTH, AS GLORIOUS AS ANY THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!
FOR, THIS IS THE DESTINY OF GOD AND MAN ALIKE... THIS IS THE LESSON SUPREME... ALL THAT LIVE MUST DIE... BUT, ALL THAT DIE SHALL LIVE!
4


HER PREDICTION DONE, THE PROPHETESS SILENTLY TAKES HER LEAVE! FOR LONG MOMENTS, REGAL ODIN SITS MOTIONLESS, THINKING THOUGHTS NO MORTAL COULD HOPE TO COMPREHEND! AND THEN ...
THUS SPAKE VOLLA!
HOW NOW SPEAK YOU, WARRIORS OF ASGARD?


THE PROUDEST... THE MIGHTIEST... THE MOST FAMED OF ALL ARE HERE ASSEMBLED!! NAMES THAT CAN SHAKE A GALAXY! HEIMDALL! VOLSTAGG! FANDRAL! HOGUN! BALDER! LOKI! THOR! NAMES THAT HAVE FIRED THE IMAGINATION OF LESSER BEINGS THROUGHOUT THE AGES! BUT NOW... EVEN FOR SUCH AS THESE ... THERE ARE NO WORDS!
YET, WHILE THE OTHERS STAND WITH HEAVY HEARTS, THERE IS ONE WHOSE SOUL IS AFLAME WITH BURNING RAGE..!

AND THEN, AT LENGTH, LOKI FINDS HIS VOICE ...!
SPEAK NOT TO ME OF RAGNAROK... FOR IT SHALL NEVER COME TO PASS!
'TIS BUT THE EMPTY CACKLING OF A WORTHLESS HAG! SURELY, MIGHTY ODIN DOES NOT BELIEVE...!!

KNOW YOU, LOKI, THE PROPHETESS CANNOT UTTER A FALSEHOOD! SHE SEES WHAT SHE DOTH SEE! RAGNAROK SHALL COME!!
AND THOU IT IS WHO ART THE CAUSE!
AS SURELY AS RAGNAROK ITSELF, LET ALL WHO READ THESE WORDS KNOW FULL WELL THAT NEW WONDERS SHALL UNFOLD NEXT ISSUE---!
WE HAVE SPOKEN!!
5.

THE MIGHTY
THOR
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IND.
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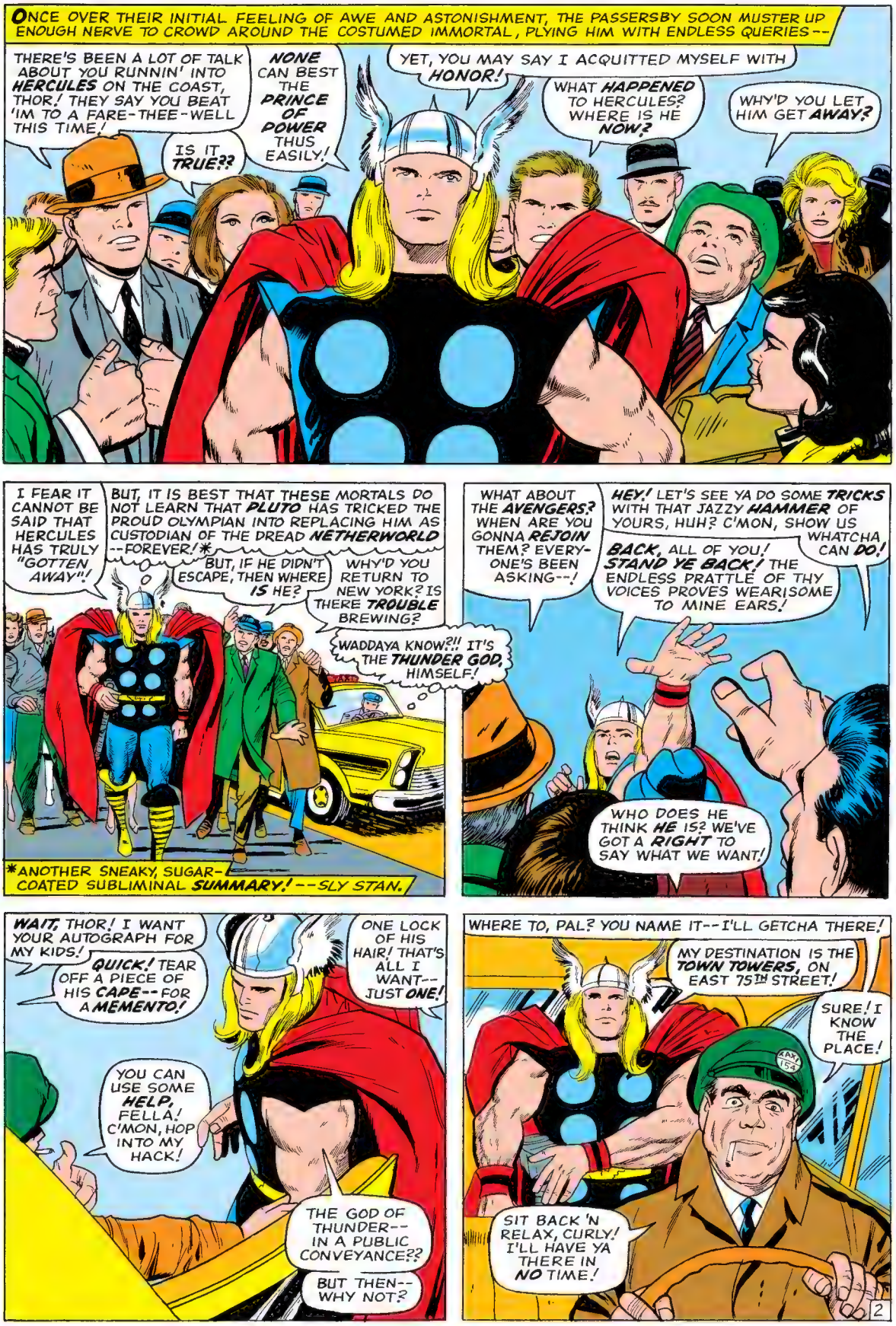
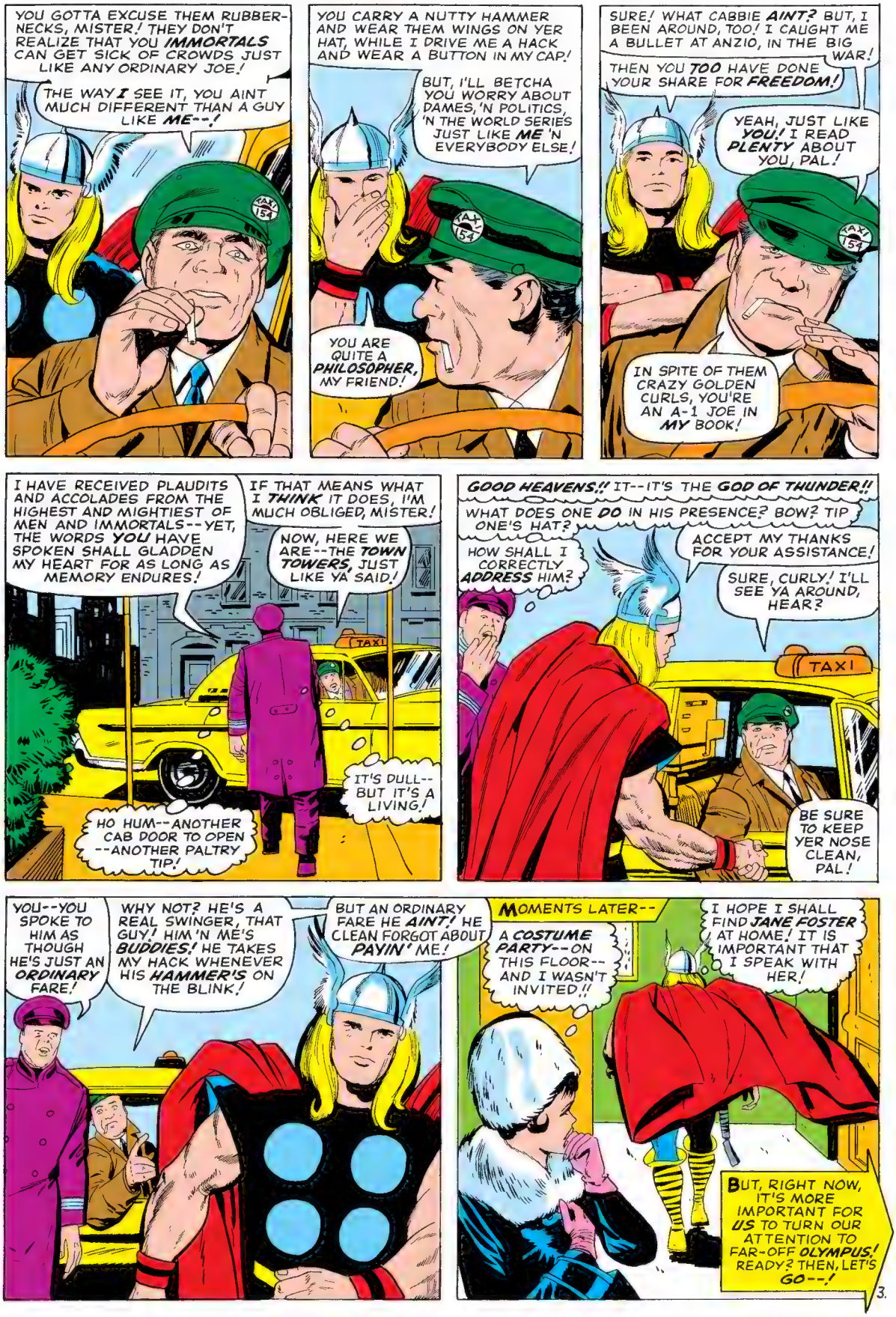
129 JUNE
"THE VERDICT OF ZEUS!"

THE MIGHTY THOR!
"THE VERDICT OF ZEUS!"
NO MATTER HOW SOPHISTICATED NEW YORKERS MAY BE, WHEN THE NOBLE FIGURE OF THE GOD OF THUNDER HURTLES DOWN FROM THE SKIES ABOVE, YOU CAN BE SOMEWHAT CERTAIN HE'LL RECEIVE MORE THAN A PASSING GLANCE--!
IT'S MIGHTY THOR! IF ONLY I HAD MY CAMERA!!
HARKEN, YE!
STAN LEE, WRITER
JACK KIRBY, PENCILLER
VINCE COLLETTA, INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER
YEA, VERILY!
1

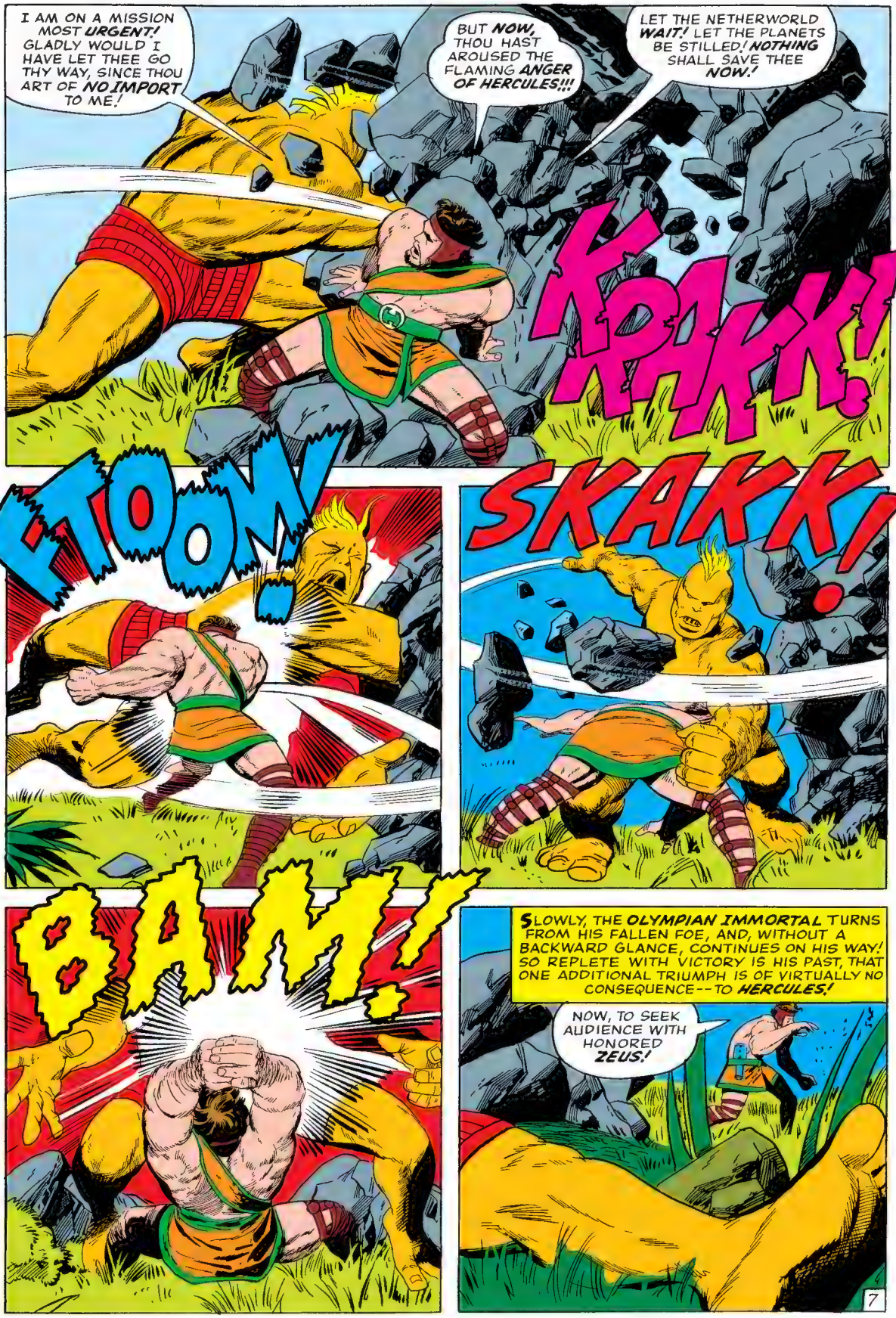

ONCE OVER THEIR INITIAL FEELING OF AWE AND ASTONISHMENT, THE PASSERSBY SOON MUSTER UP ENOUGH NERVE TO CROWD AROUND THE COSTUMED IMMORTAL, PLYING HIM WITH ENDLESS QUERIES--
THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF TALK ABOUT YOU RUNNIN' INTO HERCULES ON THE COAST, THOR! THEY SAY YOU BEAT 'IM TO A FARE-THEE-WELL THIS TIME!
IS IT TRUE??
NONE CAN BEST THE PRINCE OF POWER THUS EASILY!
YET, YOU MAY SAY I ACQUITTED MYSELF WITH HONOR!
WHAT HAPPENED TO HERCULES? WHERE IS HE NOW?
WHY'D YOU LET HIM GET AWAY?
I FEAR IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT HERCULES HAS TRULY "GOTTEN AWAY"!
BUT, IT IS BEST THAT THESE MORTALS DO NOT LEARN THAT PLUTO HAS TRICKED THE PROUD OLYMPIAN INTO REPLACING HIM AS CUSTODIAN OF THE DREAD NETHERWORLD --FOREVER!*
BUT, IF HE DIDN'T ESCAPE, THEN WHERE IS HE?
WHY'D YOU RETURN TO NEW YORK? IS THERE TROUBLE BREWING?
WADDAYA KNOW?!! IT'S THE THUNDER GOD, HIMSELF!
*ANOTHER SNEAKY, SUGAR-COATED SUBLIMINAL SUMMARY! --SLY STAN.
WHAT ABOUT THE AVENGERS? WHEN ARE YOU GONNA REJOIN THEM? EVERY-ONE'S BEEN ASKING--!
HEY! LET'S SEE YA DO SOME TRICKS WITH THAT JAZZY HAMMER OF YOURS, HUH? C'MON, SHOW US WHATCHA CAN DO!
BACK, ALL OF YOU! STAND YE BACK! THE ENDLESS PRATTLE OF THY VOICES PROVES WEARISOME TO MINE EARS!
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS? WE'VE GOT A RIGHT TO SAY WHAT WE WANT!
WAIT, THOR! I WANT YOUR AUTOGRAPH FOR MY KIDS!
QUICK! TEAR OFF A PIECE OF HIS CAPE-- FOR A MEMENTO!
ONE LOCK OF HIS HAIR! THAT'S ALL I WANT-- JUST ONE!
YOU CAN USE SOME HELP, FELLA! C'MON, HOP INTO MY HACK!
THE GOD OF THUNDER-- IN A PUBLIC CONVEYANCE??
BUT THEN-- WHY NOT?
WHERE TO, PAL? YOU NAME IT--I'LL GETCHA THERE!
MY DESTINATION IS THE TOWN TOWERS, ON EAST 75TH STREET!
SURE! I KNOW THE PLACE!
SIT BACK 'N RELAX, CURLY! I'LL HAVE YA THERE IN NO TIME!
2


YOU GOTTA EXCUSE THEM RUBBER-NECKS, MISTER! THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT YOU IMMORTALS CAN GET SICK OF CROWDS JUST LIKE ANY ORDINARY JOE!
THE WAY I SEE IT, YOU AINT MUCH DIFFERENT THAN A GUY LIKE ME--!
YOU CARRY A NUTTY HAMMER AND WEAR THEM WINGS ON YER HAT, WHILE I DRIVE ME A HACK AND WEAR A BUTTON IN MY CAP!
BUT, I'LL BETCHA YOU WORRY ABOUT DAMES, 'N POLITICS, 'N THE WORLD SERIES JUST LIKE ME 'N EVERYBODY ELSE!
YOU ARE QUITE A PHILOSOPHER, MY FRIEND!
SURE! WHAT CABBIE AINT? BUT, I BEEN AROUND, TOO! I CAUGHT ME A BULLET AT ANZIO, IN THE BIG WAR!
THEN YOU TOO HAVE DONE YOUR SHARE FOR FREEDOM!
YEAH, JUST LIKE YOU! I READ PLENTY ABOUT YOU, PAL!
IN SPITE OF THEM CRAZY GOLDEN CURLS, YOU'RE AN A-1 JOE IN MY BOOK!
I HAVE RECEIVED PLAUDITS AND ACCOLADES FROM THE HIGHEST AND MIGHTIEST OF MEN AND IMMORTALS--YET, THE WORDS YOU HAVE SPOKEN SHALL GLADDEN MY HEART FOR AS LONG AS MEMORY ENDURES!
IF THAT MEANS WHAT I THINK IT DOES, I'M MUCH OBLIGED, MISTER!
NOW, HERE WE ARE--THE TOWN TOWERS, JUST LIKE YA SAID!
TAXI
HO HUM--ANOTHER CAB DOOR TO OPEN --ANOTHER PALTRY TIP!
IT'S DULL--BUT IT'S A LIVING!
GOOD HEAVENS!! IT--IT'S THE GOD OF THUNDER!!
WHAT DOES ONE DO IN HIS PRESENCE? BOW? TIP ONE'S HAT?
HOW SHALL I CORRECTLY ADDRESS HIM?
ACCEPT MY THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!
SURE, CURLY! I'LL SEE YA AROUND, HEAR?
TAXI
BE SURE TO KEEP YER NOSE CLEAN, PAL!
YOU--YOU SPOKE TO HIM AS THOUGH HE'S JUST AN ORDINARY FARE!
WHY NOT? HE'S A REAL SWINGER, THAT GUY! HIM 'N ME'S BUDDIES! HE TAKES MY HACK WHENEVER HIS HAMMER'S ON THE BLINK!
BUT AN ORDINARY FARE HE AINT! HE CLEAN FORGOT ABOUT PAYIN' ME!
MOMENTS LATER--
A COSTUME PARTY--ON THIS FLOOR--AND I WASN'T INVITED!!
I HOPE I SHALL FIND JANE FOSTER AT HOME! IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I SPEAK WITH HER!
BUT, RIGHT NOW, IT'S MORE IMPORTANT FOR US TO TURN OUR ATTENTION TO FAR-OFF OLYMPUS! READY? THEN, LET'S GO--!
3.

OLYMPUS--WHERE REIGNS THE SPIRITED ZEUS, FATHER OF HERCULES, SUPREME SOVEREIGN OF ALL HE SURVEYS--!
AHHH, MY LORD ZEUS, HOW MERRY IS THY CELEBRATION! WHERE, BUT IN ETERNAL OLYMPUS, CAN SUCH REVELS CONTINUE WITHOUT END?!!
IN TRUTH, MY MERRY DIONYSIUS, WHEN THERE ARE NO BATTLES LEFT TO FIGHT--NO ENEMIES TO OVERCOME--THEN 'TIS TIME TO PARTAKE OF FROLIC AND OF GAMBOLS IN THIS HALCYON CLIME!
BUT SOFT! I FEEL THE PRESENCE OF EVIL APPROACHING! THE SUBTLE SCENT OF MENACE PERVADES THE VERY AIR WE BREATHE!
WE WISH YOU COULD HEAR THE JOYOUS MUSIC WHICH FILLS THE HALLOWED AIR OF OLYMPUS--BUT, ALAS, MORTAL--SUCH GODLIKE MELODIES ARE NOT FOR SUCH AS THEE! AND SO--ON WITH OUR TITANIC TALE--

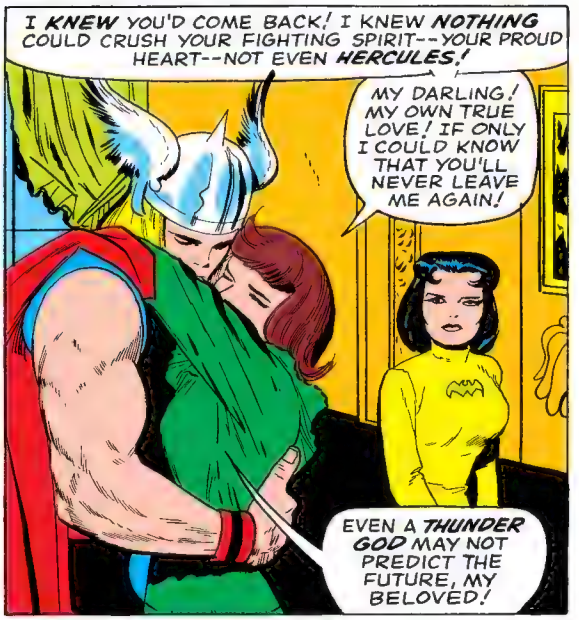
SUDDENLY, THE REVELS CEASE, IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE HEARTBEAT--AS THE GRIM, FOREBODING FIGURE OF PLUTO, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, MYSTICALLY TAKES SHAPE--IN FULL REGALIA AS EX-MONARCH OF THE NETHERWORLD--!
LET ALL ATTEND MY WORDS!!
NO LONGER NEED PLUTO REMAIN IN THE STYGIAN DEPTHS!
HARKEN, O ZEUS! I DO CLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PLACE, IN THE COUNCIL OF THE GODS--HERE, ON MOUNT OLYMPUS!
SILENCE, THOU PRINCE OF DECEIT! HAST THOU FORGOTTEN THY SENTENCE?? NOT YET HAVE I SEEN FIT TO SET THEE FREE!
'TIS YOU WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN, MY LORD! THERE WAS ONE CONDITION IN THE CONTRACT--
IF I COULD FIND AN IMMORTAL WHO WOULD CONSENT TO REPLACE ME IN THE NETHERWORLD, I WOULD THEN BE FREED!
AT LAST--I HAVE FOUND SUCH A ONE!
IF ANY HAVE BEEN WITLESS ENOW TO SIGN THY CONTRACT, IT WAS BECAUSE THOU RESORTED TO BASE TRICKERY! BUT, NO MATTER!
WHAT'S DONE, 'TIS DONE!
WHAT IS THE NAME OF THY HAPLESS VICTIM??
'TIS A NAME THOU KNOWEST FULL WELL, SIRE!
HE WHO HATH CARELESSLY SIGNED THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT IS NONE OTHER THAN THINE OWN SON--HERCULES!!
5

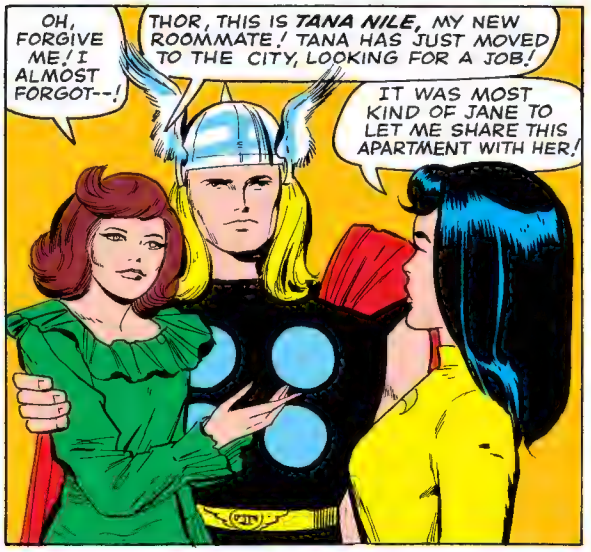
BUT, EVEN AS THE THUNDERSTRUCK ZEUS RECOILS IN STUNNED SURPRISE, THE LONELY FIGURE OF THE PRINCE OF POWER SCALES THE MASSIVE PEAK OF MOUNT OLYMPUS--COMPLETING A CLIMB WHICH VERILY DEFIES MERE HUMAN COMPREHENSION--!
I MUST REACH THE THRONE OF ZEUS! ONLY HE CAN FREE ME FROM THE DIRE TERMS OF THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT TO WHICH I SO BLINDLY AFFIXED MY MARK!
I, WHO AM HERCULES--WHO AM POWER INCARNATE--WHO HAVE BESTED EVERY FOE--MET EVERY DANGER--SURMOUNTED EVERY OBSTACLE--I CANNOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF AN ETERNITY, SPENT IN THE SHADOWY DESOLATION OF THE NETHERWORLD!
AHH--THE SUMMIT AT LAST! NOW TO--STAY! WHAT IS THIS?!!
A YELLOW-CRESTED TITAN!! FIERCEST AND MOST POWERFUL OF ALL THE SAVAGE BREED!
STAND THOU ASIDE, MONSTROUS MARAUDER! HERCULES SO COMMANDS!
BUT, THE DIM-WITTED, RAMPAGING CREATURE IS TOO CONSUMED WITH SAVAGERY, WITH UNREASONING HATRED, TO DO AUGHT BUT STRIKE OUT--
KHOOM!
6


I AM ON A MISSION MOST URGENT! GLADLY WOULD I HAVE LET THEE GO THY WAY, SINCE THOU ART OF NO IMPORT TO ME!
BUT NOW, THOU HAST AROUSED THE FLAMING ANGER OF HERCULES!!!
LET THE NETHERWORLD WAIT! LET THE PLANETS BE STILLED! NOTHING SHALL SAVE THEE NOW!
KRAKK!
FTOOM!
SKAKK!
BAM!
SLOWLY, THE OLYMPIAN IMMORTAL TURNS FROM HIS FALLEN FOE, AND, WITHOUT A BACKWARD GLANCE, CONTINUES ON HIS WAY! SO REPLETE WITH VICTORY IS HIS PAST, THAT ONE ADDITIONAL TRIUMPH IS OF VIRTUALLY NO CONSEQUENCE--TO HERCULES!
NOW, TO SEEK AUDIENCE WITH HONORED ZEUS!
7

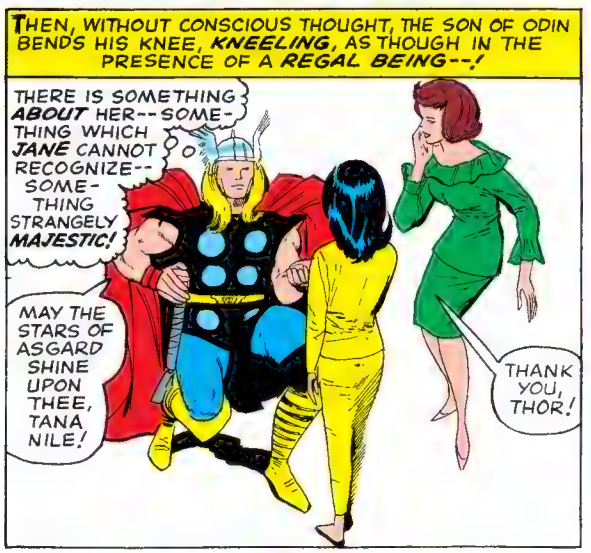
A SHORT TIME LATER, HIS DESTINATION REACHED, HERCULES ENTERS THE GLEAMING CASTLE--
'TIS MOST PASSING STRANGE! THOUGH I AM SEEN BY ALL, NONE THERE ARE WHO APPROACH ME!
THEN, SUDDENLY--
ZUMM!
ADVANCE NO FURTHER, TRAGIC OFFSPRING! THERE CAN BE NO SANCTUARY FOR THEE IN OLYMPUS!
THE VOICE OF MY FATHER! THEN--HE ALREADY KNOWS!
IS MY PLEA TO BE THUS DENIED--ERE I AM ALLOWED TO PRESENT IT?
MY SON--I KNOW THOU HAST BEEN GROSSLY DECEIVED! YET, THOU DIDST SIGN THE COMPACT--AND, MORE PRECIOUS TO THY FATHER THAN LIFE ITSELF IS--HONOR!
THOU MUST BE TRUE TO THY DEED! THOUGH THOU BE FAVORED ABOVE ALL IN MINE EYES, I DO BANISH THEE TO THE NETHERWORLD!
HEAR ME, MY FATHER! A CHANCE IS ALL I CRAVE! THE CHANCE TO FIGHT FOR MY FREEDOM!
I BEG NO FAVOR--I ASK NO PITY! BUT, I AM HERCULES!! I KNOW NOT HOW TO YIELD!
ALAS, MY SON! THY PRIDE HATH BEEN THY DOWNFALL! NOW MUST THOU LEARN THE LESSON OF--HUMILITY!
MY ONLY CHANCE! I MUST FIND A CHAMPION WHO WILL DO BATTLE IN MY BEHALF!
BUT WHERE IN THE UNIVERSE IS THERE ONE SO SELFLESS??!
FIND YE ONE WHO WILL FIGHT IN THY STEAD! ONE WHO WILL RISK THE NETHERWORLD HIMSELF TO SAVE THEE!

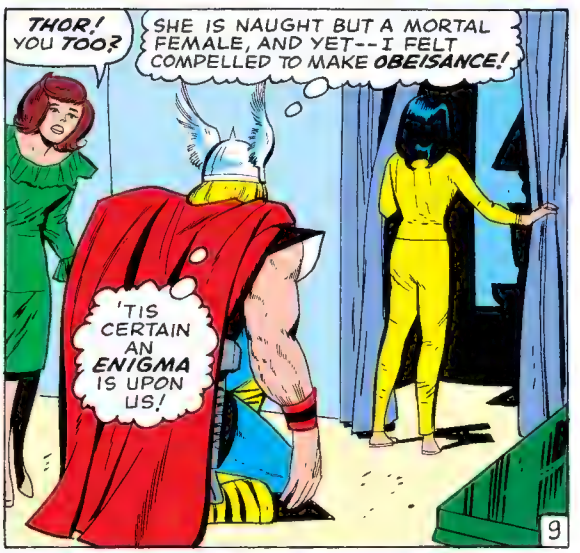
AND, EVEN AS HERCULES PONDERS HIS FATE, ON THE PLANET EARTH A DOOR SLOWLY OPENS, AND THE GOD OF THUNDER BEHOLDS--
A FEMALE! ONE WHOM I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE--AND YET--SHE IS STRANGELY FAMILIAR!
YOU WISH TO SEE JANE FOSTER?
THOR! IT'S YOU--AT LAST!
JANE! I HAVE RETURNED!

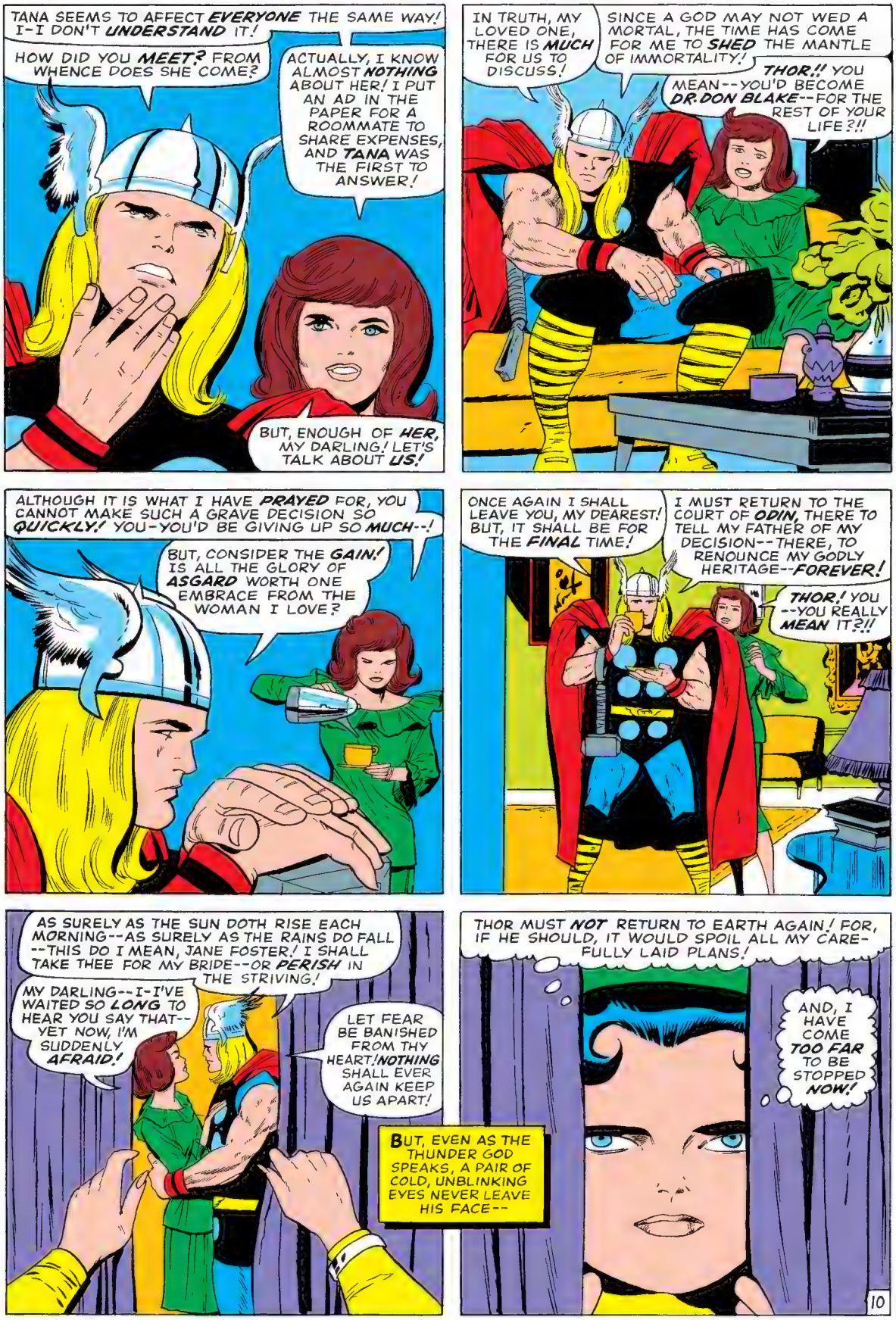

I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK! I KNEW NOTHING COULD CRUSH YOUR FIGHTING SPIRIT--YOUR PROUD HEART--NOT EVEN HERCULES!
MY DARLING! MY OWN TRUE LOVE! IF ONLY I COULD KNOW THAT YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE ME AGAIN!
EVEN A THUNDER GOD MAY NOT PREDICT THE FUTURE, MY BELOVED!


OH, FORGIVE ME! I ALMOST FORGOT--!
THOR, THIS IS TANA NILE, MY NEW ROOMMATE! TANA HAS JUST MOVED TO THE CITY, LOOKING FOR A JOB!
IT WAS MOST KIND OF JANE TO LET ME SHARE THIS APARTMENT WITH HER!

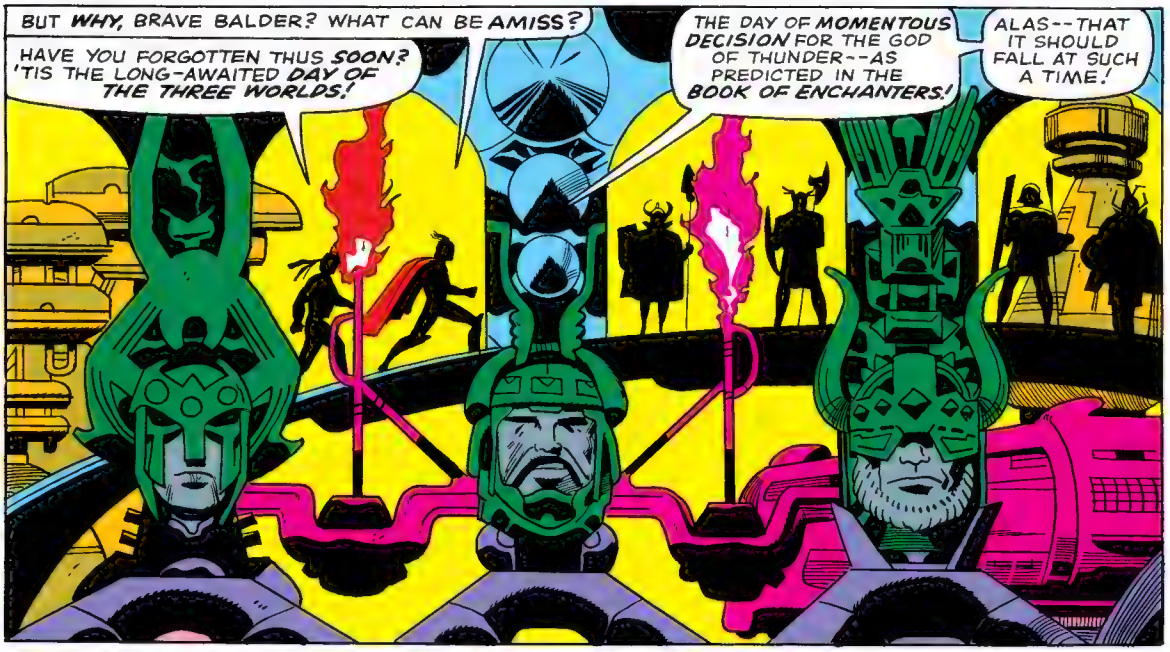
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH PERFECTLY! AND YET, YOU DO NOT SOUND LIKE A NATIVE OF THIS LAND!
YOU ARE RIGHT, GOD OF THUNDER! I COME FROM--A DISTANT PLACE!
BUT, THERE IS NO NEED TO DISCUSS THAT NOW!

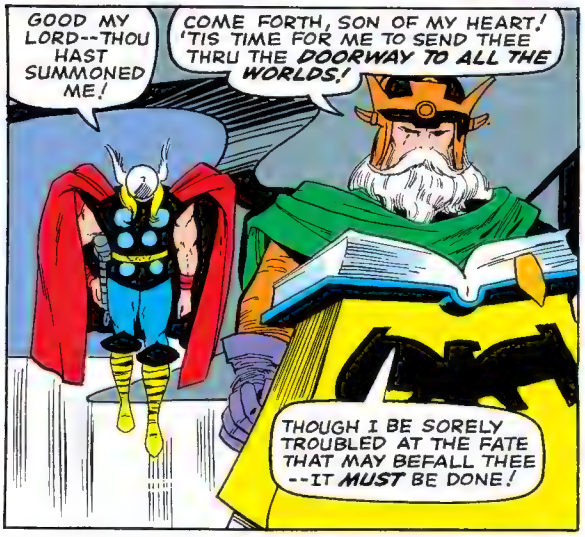

THEN, WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT, THE SON OF ODIN BENDS HIS KNEE, KNEELING, AS THOUGH IN THE PRESENCE OF A REGAL BEING--!
THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT HER--SOMETHING WHICH JANE CANNOT RECOGNIZE--SOMETHING STRANGELY MAJESTIC!
MAY THE STARS OF ASGARD SHINE UPON THEE, TANA NILE!
THANK YOU, THOR!

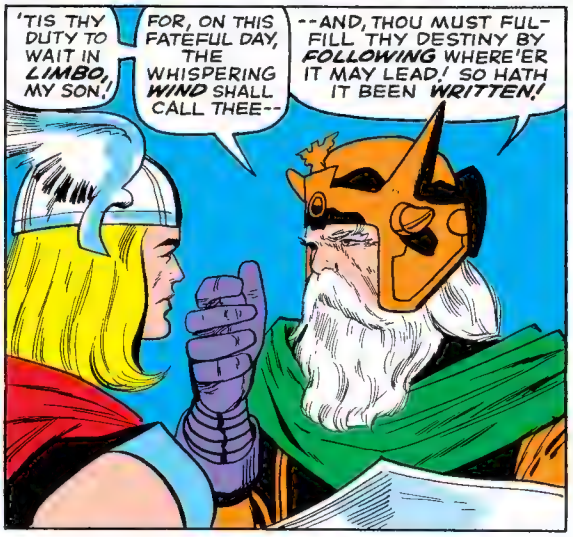

THOR! YOU TOO?
SHE IS NAUGHT BUT A MORTAL FEMALE, AND YET--I FELT COMPELLED TO MAKE OBEISANCE!
'TIS CERTAIN AN ENIGMA IS UPON US!


TANA SEEMS TO AFFECT EVERYONE THE SAME WAY! I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!
HOW DID YOU MEET? FROM WHENCE DOES SHE COME?
ACTUALLY, I KNOW ALMOST NOTHING ABOUT HER! I PUT AN AD IN THE PAPER FOR A ROOMMATE TO SHARE EXPENSES, AND TANA WAS THE FIRST TO ANSWER!
BUT, ENOUGH OF HER, MY DARLING! LET'S TALK ABOUT US!
IN TRUTH, MY LOVED ONE, THERE IS MUCH FOR US TO DISCUSS!
SINCE A GOD MAY NOT WED A MORTAL, THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO SHED THE MANTLE OF IMMORTALITY!
THOR!! YOU MEAN--YOU'D BECOME DR. DON BLAKE--FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?!!
ALTHOUGH IT IS WHAT I HAVE PRAYED FOR, YOU CANNOT MAKE SUCH A GRAVE DECISION SO QUICKLY! YOU-YOU'D BE GIVING UP SO MUCH--!
BUT, CONSIDER THE GAIN! IS ALL THE GLORY OF ASGARD WORTH ONE EMBRACE FROM THE WOMAN I LOVE?
ONCE AGAIN I SHALL LEAVE YOU, MY DEAREST! BUT, IT SHALL BE FOR THE FINAL TIME!
I MUST RETURN TO THE COURT OF ODIN, THERE TO TELL MY FATHER OF MY DECISION--THERE, TO RENOUNCE MY GODLY HERITAGE--FOREVER!
THOR! YOU --YOU REALLY MEAN IT?!!
AS SURELY AS THE SUN DOTH RISE EACH MORNING--AS SURELY AS THE RAINS DO FALL --THIS DO I MEAN, JANE FOSTER! I SHALL TAKE THEE FOR MY BRIDE--OR PERISH IN THE STRIVING!
MY DARLING--I-I'VE WAITED SO LONG TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT-- YET NOW, I'M SUDDENLY AFRAID!
LET FEAR BE BANISHED FROM THY HEART! NOTHING SHALL EVER AGAIN KEEP US APART!
BUT, EVEN AS THE THUNDER GOD SPEAKS, A PAIR OF COLD, UNBLINKING EYES NEVER LEAVE HIS FACE--
THOR MUST NOT RETURN TO EARTH AGAIN! FOR, IF HE SHOULD, IT WOULD SPOIL ALL MY CAREFULLY LAID PLANS!
AND, I HAVE COME TOO FAR TO BE STOPPED NOW!

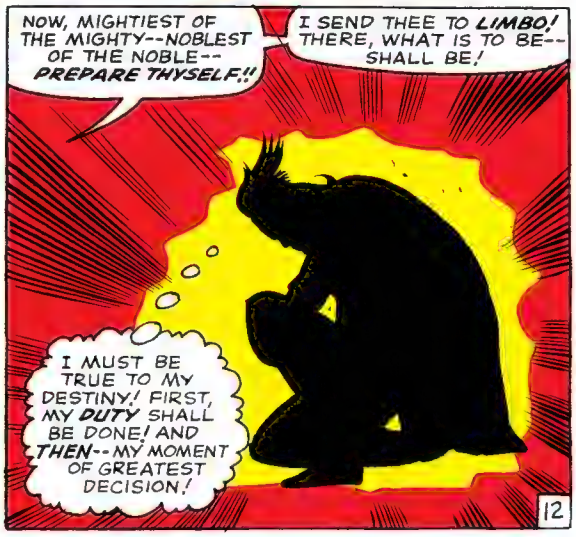
MOMENTS LATER, AFTER A BRIEF BUT TENDER FAREWELL...
NOW TO RETURN TO THE GOLDEN REALM...
...PERHAPS FOR THE FINAL TIME!
SHOOSH!
CREATING A SPACE/TIME-DISTORTING VORTEX, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER REACHES THE FABLED RAINBOW BRIDGE TO ASGARD JUST IN TIME TO SEE--
BRAVE BALDER--ABOUT TO SET FORTH UPON SOME MISSION! I MUST GREET THE MOST FAITHFUL OF ALL WHO SERVE THE THRONE!
MIGHTY THOR!! YOU HAVE SAVED ME FROM MY INTENDED JOURNEY!
GIVE WORDS TO THY THOUGHT, LOYAL ONE! OF WHAT NATURE WAS THY MISSION?
I AM UNDER DIRECT ORDERS OF NOBLE ODIN HIMSELF! HE COMMANDED ME TO LOCATE YOU!
FOR WHAT PURPOSE, VALIANT FRIEND?
HE MUST TELL YOU THAT HIMSELF!
SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT HE IS SORELY DISTURBED! I AM ORDERED TO BRING YOU TO HIM AT ONCE!

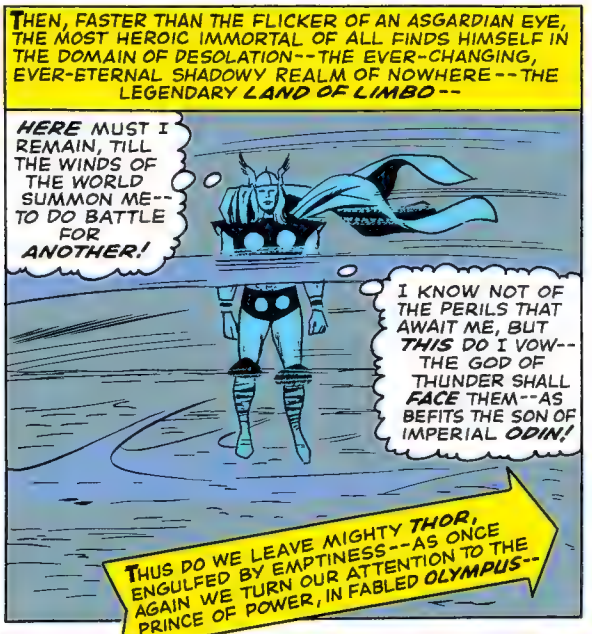

BUT WHY, BRAVE BALDER? WHAT CAN BE AMISS?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THUS SOON? 'TIS THE LONG-AWAITED DAY OF THE THREE WORLDS!
THE DAY OF MOMENTOUS DECISION FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER--AS PREDICTED IN THE BOOK OF ENCHANTERS!
ALAS--THAT IT SHOULD FALL AT SUCH A TIME!


GOOD MY LORD--THOU HAST SUMMONED ME!
COME FORTH, SON OF MY HEART! 'TIS TIME FOR ME TO SEND THEE THRU THE DOORWAY TO ALL THE WORLDS!
THOUGH I BE SORELY TROUBLED AT THE FATE THAT MAY BEFALL THEE --IT MUST BE DONE!

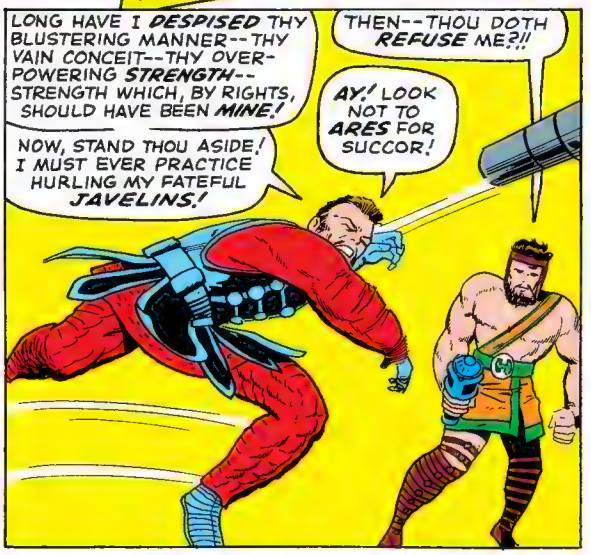

'TIS THY DUTY TO WAIT IN LIMBO, MY SON!
FOR, ON THIS FATEFUL DAY, THE WHISPERING WIND SHALL CALL THEE--
--AND, THOU MUST FULFILL THY DESTINY BY FOLLOWING WHERE'ER IT MAY LEAD! SO HATH IT BEEN WRITTEN!

THE PROPHECIES HAVE SAID: IN THREE WORLDS SHALL THE GOD OF THUNDER STAKE ALL--ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER!
BUT, MOST NOBLE FATHER, I HAVE COME TO THEE FOR YET ANOTHER PURPOSE--TO DISCUSS A MOST MOMENTOUS DECISION--
BE THOU SILENT! AFTER THE DAY OF THE THREE WORLDS SHALL HAVE PASSED, ONLY THEN SHALL WE DISCOURSE OF LESSER MATTERS!


NOW, MIGHTIEST OF THE MIGHTY--NOBLEST OF THE NOBLE-- PREPARE THYSELF!!
I SEND THEE TO LIMBO! THERE, WHAT IS TO BE--SHALL BE!
I MUST BE TRUE TO MY DESTINY! FIRST, MY DUTY SHALL BE DONE! AND THEN--MY MOMENT OF GREATEST DECISION!

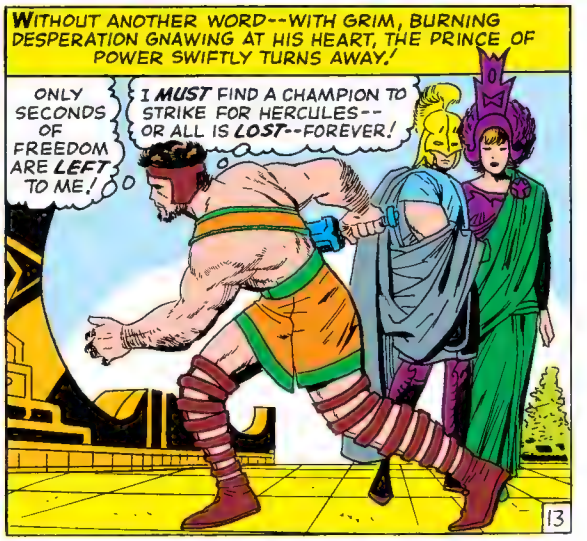

THEN, FASTER THAN THE FLICKER OF AN ASGARDIAN EYE, THE MOST HEROIC IMMORTAL OF ALL FINDS HIMSELF IN THE DOMAIN OF DESOLATION--THE EVER-CHANGING, EVER-ETERNAL SHADOWY REALM OF NOWHERE--THE LEGENDARY LAND OF LIMBO--
HERE MUST I REMAIN, TILL THE WINDS OF THE WORLD SUMMON ME--TO DO BATTLE FOR ANOTHER!
I KNOW NOT OF THE PERILS THAT AWAIT ME, BUT THIS DO I VOW--THE GOD OF THUNDER SHALL FACE THEM--AS BEFITS THE SON OF IMPERIAL ODIN!
THUS DO WE LEAVE MIGHTY THOR, ENGULFED BY EMPTINESS--AS ONCE AGAIN WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PRINCE OF POWER, IN FABLED OLYMPUS--

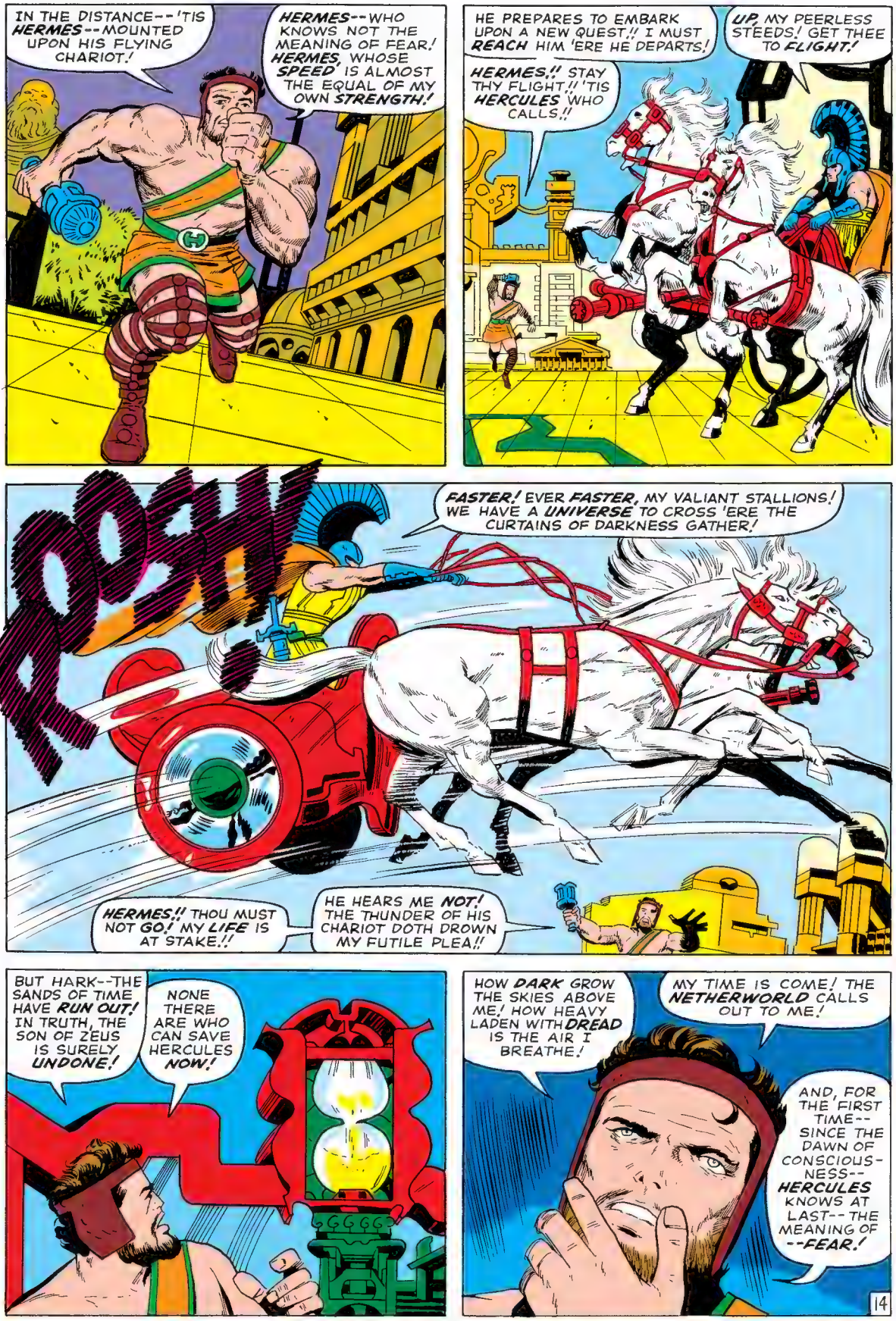
ARES! I CRAVE A BOON! BECAUSE I SIGNED AN OLYMPIAN CONTRACT, MY ARM MAY NO MORE BE LIFTED IN BATTLE!
I MUST FIND ONE WILLING TO RISK ALL IN ORDER TO FIGHT--TO DARE--FOR THE CAUSE OF HERCULES!
THEN THOU MUST SEEK HIM ELSE-WHERE, SON OF ZEUS!

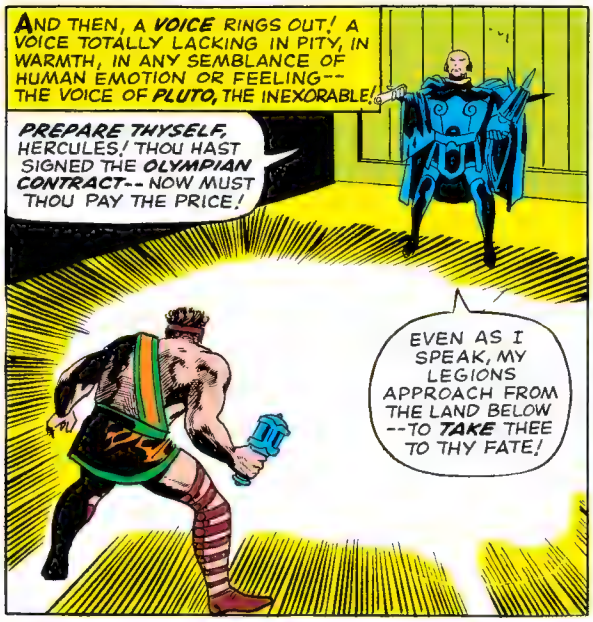

LONG HAVE I DESPISED THY BLUSTERING MANNER--THY VAIN CONCEIT--THY OVER-POWERING STRENGTH--STRENGTH WHICH, BY RIGHTS, SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!
NOW, STAND THOU ASIDE! I MUST EVER PRACTICE HURLING MY FATEFUL JAVELINS!
THEN--THOU DOTH REFUSE ME?!!
AY! LOOK NOT TO ARES FOR SUCCOR!

GOD OF WAR THOU ART CALLED! WHERE THEN IS THY WARLIKE SPIRIT? WHERE THEN THY LUST FOR COMBAT??
UNHAND ME, DOOMED ONE! EVEN ARES IS NOT WITLESS ENOUGH TO DO BATTLE WITH MIGHTY PLUTO--AND HIS DEADLY LEGIONS!

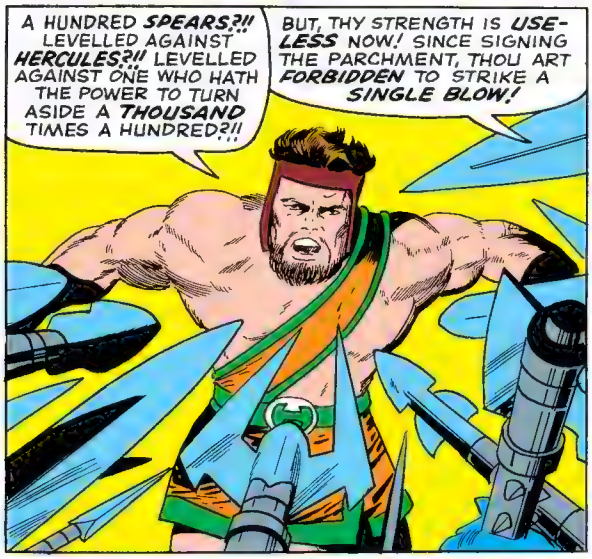
NEVER SHALL I FORGET HOW THOU HAST TURNED THY BACK UPON THY FELLOW OLYMPIAN...BASE, BLACK-HEARTED COWARD!
REMEMBER THEN, HERCULES--AS THOU SPENDEST ETERNITY IN THE NETHERWORLD!


WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD--WITH GRIM, BURNING DESPERATION GNAWING AT HIS HEART, THE PRINCE OF POWER SWIFTLY TURNS AWAY!
ONLY SECONDS OF FREEDOM ARE LEFT TO ME!
I MUST FIND A CHAMPION TO STRIKE FOR HERCULES--OR ALL IS LOST--FOREVER!

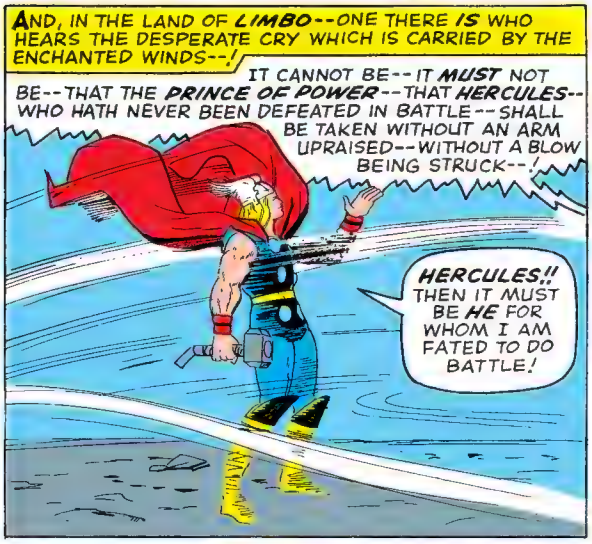

IN THE DISTANCE--'TIS HERMES--MOUNTED UPON HIS FLYING CHARIOT!
HERMES--WHO KNOWS NOT THE MEANING OF FEAR! HERMES, WHOSE SPEED IS ALMOST THE EQUAL OF MY OWN STRENGTH!
HE PREPARES TO EMBARK UPON A NEW QUEST!! I MUST REACH HIM 'ERE HE DEPARTS!
UP, MY PEERLESS STEEDS! GET THEE TO FLIGHT!
HERMES!! STAY THY FLIGHT!! 'TIS HERCULES WHO CALLS!!
FASTER! EVER FASTER, MY VALIANT STALLIONS! WE HAVE A UNIVERSE TO CROSS 'ERE THE CURTAINS OF DARKNESS GATHER!
HERMES!! THOU MUST NOT GO! MY LIFE IS AT STAKE!!
HE HEARS ME NOT! THE THUNDER OF HIS CHARIOT DOTH DROWN MY FUTILE PLEA!!
BUT HARK--THE SANDS OF TIME HAVE RUN OUT! IN TRUTH, THE SON OF ZEUS IS SURELY UNDONE!
NONE THERE ARE WHO CAN SAVE HERCULES NOW!
HOW DARK GROW THE SKIES ABOVE ME! HOW HEAVY LADEN WITH DREAD IS THE AIR I BREATHE!
MY TIME IS COME! THE NETHERWORLD CALLS OUT TO ME!
AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME-- SINCE THE DAWN OF CONSCIOUSNESS-- HERCULES KNOWS AT LAST-- THE MEANING OF --FEAR!


AND THEN, A VOICE RINGS OUT! A VOICE TOTALLY LACKING IN PITY, IN WARMTH, IN ANY SEMBLANCE OF HUMAN EMOTION OR FEELING--THE VOICE OF PLUTO, THE INEXORABLE!
PREPARE THYSELF, HERCULES! THOU HAST SIGNED THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT--NOW MUST THOU PAY THE PRICE!
EVEN AS I SPEAK, MY LEGIONS APPROACH FROM THE LAND BELOW--TO TAKE THEE TO THY FATE!

AFTER ALL THESE AGES, I AM FREED AT LAST--WHILE THOU SHALL SERVE IN MY PLACE--TILL TIME ITSELF DOTH VANISH!
ARISE, DENIZENS OF THE ABYSMAL DEPTHS--ARISE, AND CLAIM THY NEW KING!


A HUNDRED SPEARS?!! LEVELLED AGAINST HERCULES?!! LEVELLED AGAINST ONE WHO HATH THE POWER TO TURN ASIDE A THOUSAND TIMES A HUNDRED?!!
BUT, THY STRENGTH IS USELESS NOW! SINCE SIGNING THE PARCHMENT, THOU ART FORBIDDEN TO STRIKE A SINGLE BLOW!

ONLY ANOTHER MAY DO BATTLE IN THY BEHALF! BUT, NONE WOULD BE SO FOOLHARDY! PREPARE THYSELF THEN--TO YIELD--!
NAY! SOMEWHERE--SOMEWHERE IN THE VAST, LIMITLESS UNIVERSE THERE MUST MUST BE ONE--ONE WHO WILL HEED MY CALL--!!!


AND, IN THE LAND OF LIMBO--ONE THERE IS WHO HEARS THE DESPERATE CRY WHICH IS CARRIED BY THE ENCHANTED WINDS--!
IT CANNOT BE--IT MUST NOT BE--THAT THE PRINCE OF POWER--THAT HERCULES--WHO HATH NEVER BEEN DEFEATED IN BATTLE--SHALL BE TAKEN WITHOUT AN ARM UPRAISED--WITHOUT A BLOW BEING STRUCK--!
HERCULES!! THEN IT MUST BE HE FOR WHOM I AM FATED TO DO BATTLE!

SURELY THERE IS NONE MORE WORTHY--NONE MORE DESERVING--THAN THE SON OF ZEUS!
IF THE POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD CAN AID THE OLYMPIAN--THEN SO BE IT!

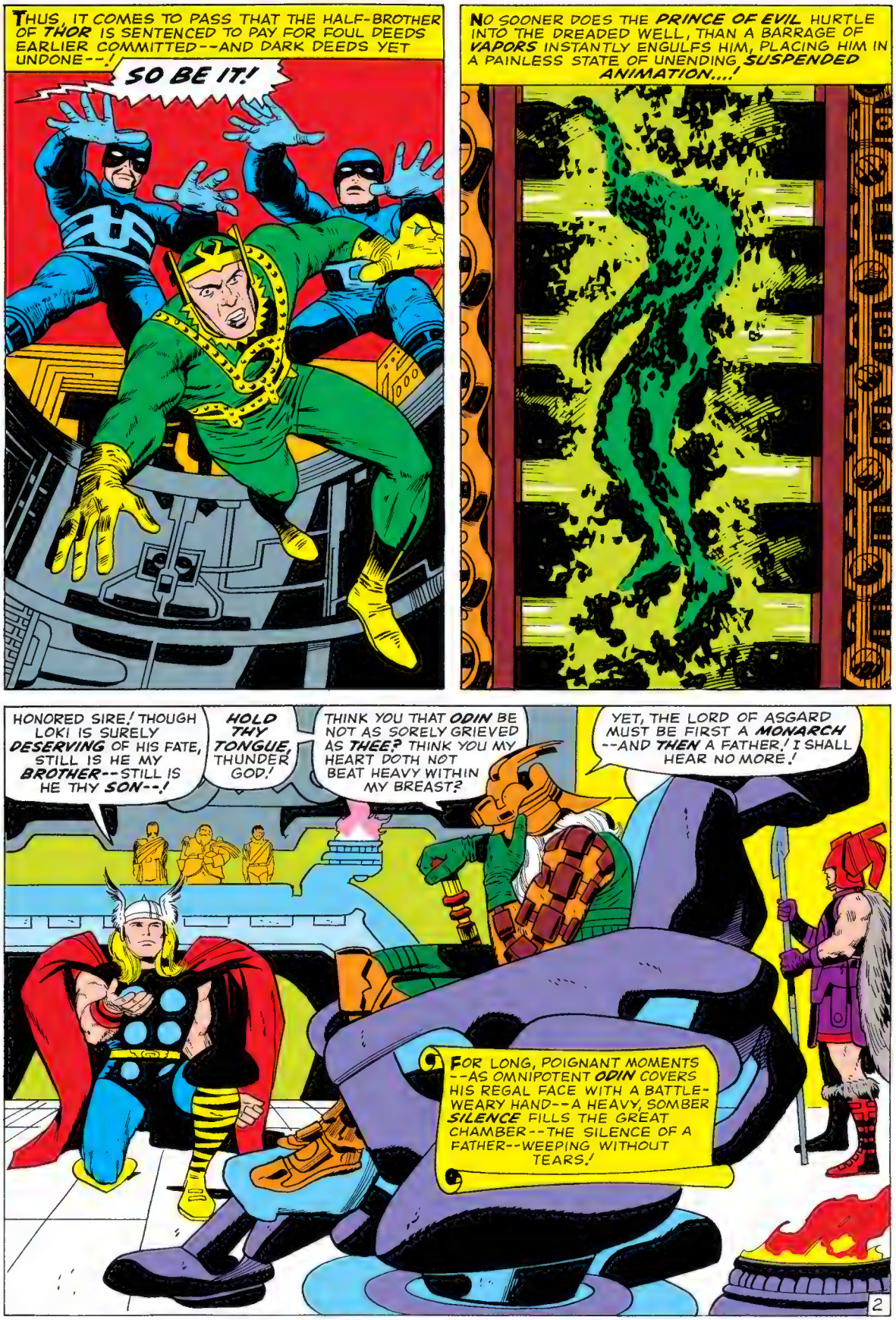
WITH A DEAFENING ROAR THE WINDS SUDDENLY CEASE THEIR SWIRLING, AND--WHEN THE MISTS HAVE CLEARED, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER FINDS HIMSELF IN--
OLYMPUS!! THE REALM OF REGAL ZEUS!
IT IS HERE THEN THAT MY DESTINY AWAITS ME!
AHEAD OF ME--THE HUBBUB OF VOICES--AND ONE MORE POWERFUL, MORE DESPERATE THAN ANY OTHER--THE VOICE OF HERCULES!
HERCULES--HE WHO HAD BEEN MY FOE--HE, FOR WHOM I AM NOW PREPARED TO RISK ALL ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE--AGAINST UNKNOWN ODDS!
SEIZE HIM! FEAR NOT HIS STRENGTH--HE IS FORBIDDEN TO EMPLOY IT SO LONG AS I HOLD THIS CONTRACT!
LET ME THEN BE TAKEN! OF WHAT USE IS IT TO REMAIN IN A WORLD WHERE NONE WILL STAND UP FOR ANOTHER WHO HATH BEEN UNJUSTLY USED?
ALL HAIL THE NEW LORD OF THE NETHERWORLD! PLUTO IS THUS FREED--WHILST HERCULES SHALL SERVE IN HIS STEAD--FOREVER!
THE TIME OF VALOR IS PAST! THE AGE OF THE WARRIOR IS DEAD! LET HERCULES THEN PERISH WITH THEM!
HAH! IT IS THINE OWN ACCURSED POWER WHICH HAS PROVEN TO BE THINE UNDOING! ONLY ENEMIES HAST THOU MADE IN BATTLE--NEVER FRIENDS!
I SAY THEE NAY, EMPEROR OF EVIL! ONE THERE IS WHO SHALL FIGHT FOR THE PRINCE OF POWER!
LET THY WARRIORS GATHER! LET THY OWN AWESOME FORCES BE ASSEMBLED! AGAINST THEM ALL, I SHALL PREVAIL!
IMPOSSIBLE!! NONE THERE ARE WHO WOULD DARE--!!
NONE--SAVE A WARRIOR BORN!
THE GOD OF THUNDER DARES!!
NEXT ISSUE:
INTO THE NETHERWORLD!

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS

"THE HORDES OF HAROKIN!"

NO! NO! I AM INNOCENT! IT IS LIES-- ALL LIES!! SPARE ME--!
Know Ye This:
IT HATH BEEN PREDICTED THAT TRAITOROUS LOKI, BY UNITING THE FORCES OF EVIL, WOULD ONE DAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RAGNAROK, THE END OF THE WORLD!
THEREFORE, IMPERIAL ODIN DOTH ISSUE A GRIM COMMAND...
TO THE WELL OF ETERNAL SLEEP WITH HIM! I HAVE SPOKEN!

FABULOUSLY WRITTEN BY... STAN LEE
FANTASTICALLY DRAWN BY... JACK KIRBY
FASTIDIOUSLY INKED BY..... V. COLLETTA
FINALLY LETTERED BY..... ARTIE SIMEK


THUS, IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE HALF-BROTHER OF THOR IS SENTENCED TO PAY FOR FOUL DEEDS EARLIER COMMITTED--AND DARK DEEDS YET UNDONE--!
SO BE IT!
NO SOONER DOES THE PRINCE OF EVIL HURTLE INTO THE DREADED WELL, THAN A BARRAGE OF VAPORS INSTANTLY ENGULFS HIM, PLACING HIM IN A PAINLESS STATE OF UNENDING SUSPENDED ANIMATION....!
HONORED SIRE! THOUGH LOKI IS SURELY DESERVING OF HIS FATE, STILL IS HE MY BROTHER--STILL IS HE THY SON--!
HOLD THY TONGUE, THUNDER GOD!
THINK YOU THAT ODIN BE NOT AS SORELY GRIEVED AS THEE? THINK YOU MY HEART DOTH NOT BEAT HEAVY WITHIN MY BREAST?
YET, THE LORD OF ASGARD MUST BE FIRST A MONARCH --AND THEN A FATHER! I SHALL HEAR NO MORE!
FOR LONG, POIGNANT MOMENTS --AS OMNIPOTENT ODIN COVERS HIS REGAL FACE WITH A BATTLE-WEARY HAND--A HEAVY, SOMBER SILENCE FILLS THE GREAT CHAMBER--THE SILENCE OF A FATHER--WEEPING WITHOUT TEARS!
2

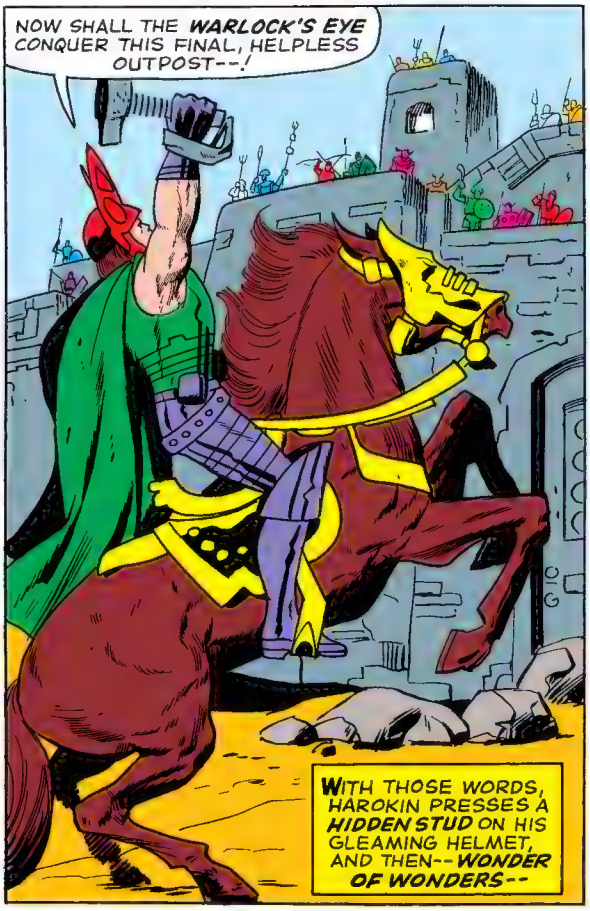
BUT THEN, AT LAST, THE SPELL IS SHATTERED BY THE STENTORIAN VOICE OF THE SOVEREIGN OF ASGARD--!
REMAIN WHERE THOU ART, GOD OF THUNDER!
AND NOW, LET HOGUN, VOLSTAGG, AND FANDRAL APPROACH THE ROYAL PRESENCE!
-AHH!- NOW SHALL MY HEART SING-- FOR A MISSION IS IN THE OFFING!

THE LIFE OF HOGUN, THE GRIM IS THINE, NOBLE ODIN--FOR THOU ART TRULY ASGARD!
SO TOO SPEAKS VOLSTAGG, SIRE! I, THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS, FLY TO THY SERVICE!
THOUGH A THOUSAND KNAVES OPPOSE ME, THE BLADE OF FANDRAL, THE DASHING, SHALL SING FOR MY LORD!
THEN COME YE FORTH-- ALL-- AND HEED MY WORDS--!

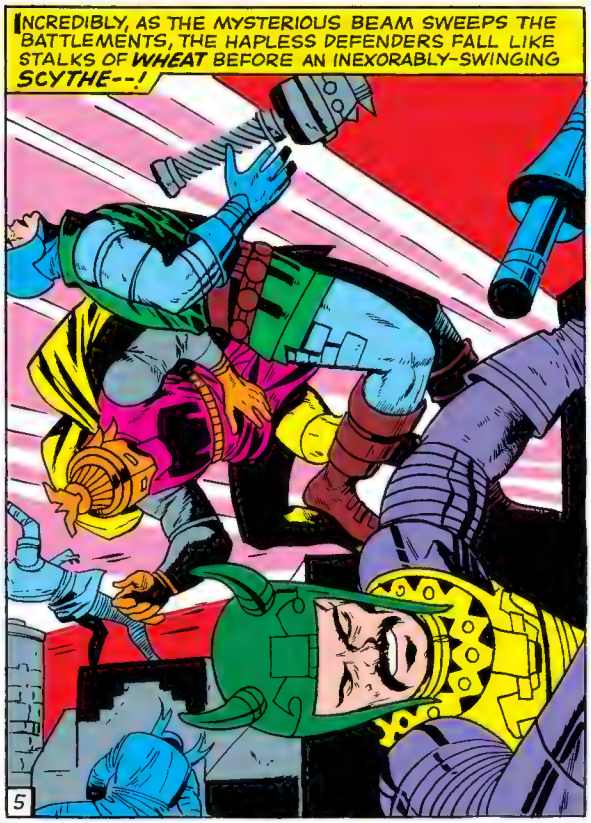
TO THE LAND OF MUSPELHEIM SHALT THOU JOURNEY--THERE TO FETCH FOR THY LIEGE THE ENCHANTED WARLOCK'S EYE FROM THE TEMPLE OF MYSTICS!
ONLY BY KEEPING SUCH WEAPONS FROM THE FORCES OF EVIL CAN THE DAY OF RAGNAROK BE POSTPONED!
THEN GET THEE HENCE, MY WARRIORS! MAY THE EYES OF ASGARD BE EVER UPON THEE!

BUT, EVEN AS ODIN SPEAKS, CALAMITY HAS ALREADY STRUCK! AT A FAR OUTPOST, NEAR THE LAND OF MUSPELHEIM, A FATEFUL ALARM RINGS OUT--!
TO ARMS!! TO ARMS!! THE HORDES OF HAROKIN ATTACK!
BEHOLD! IN THE DISTANCE-- MUSPELHEIM IS ALREADY AFLAME! HAROKIN HATH BROKEN THRU!
HE HATH SEIZED THE WARLOCK'S EYE!
THEN-- TRULY WE ARE UNDONE!

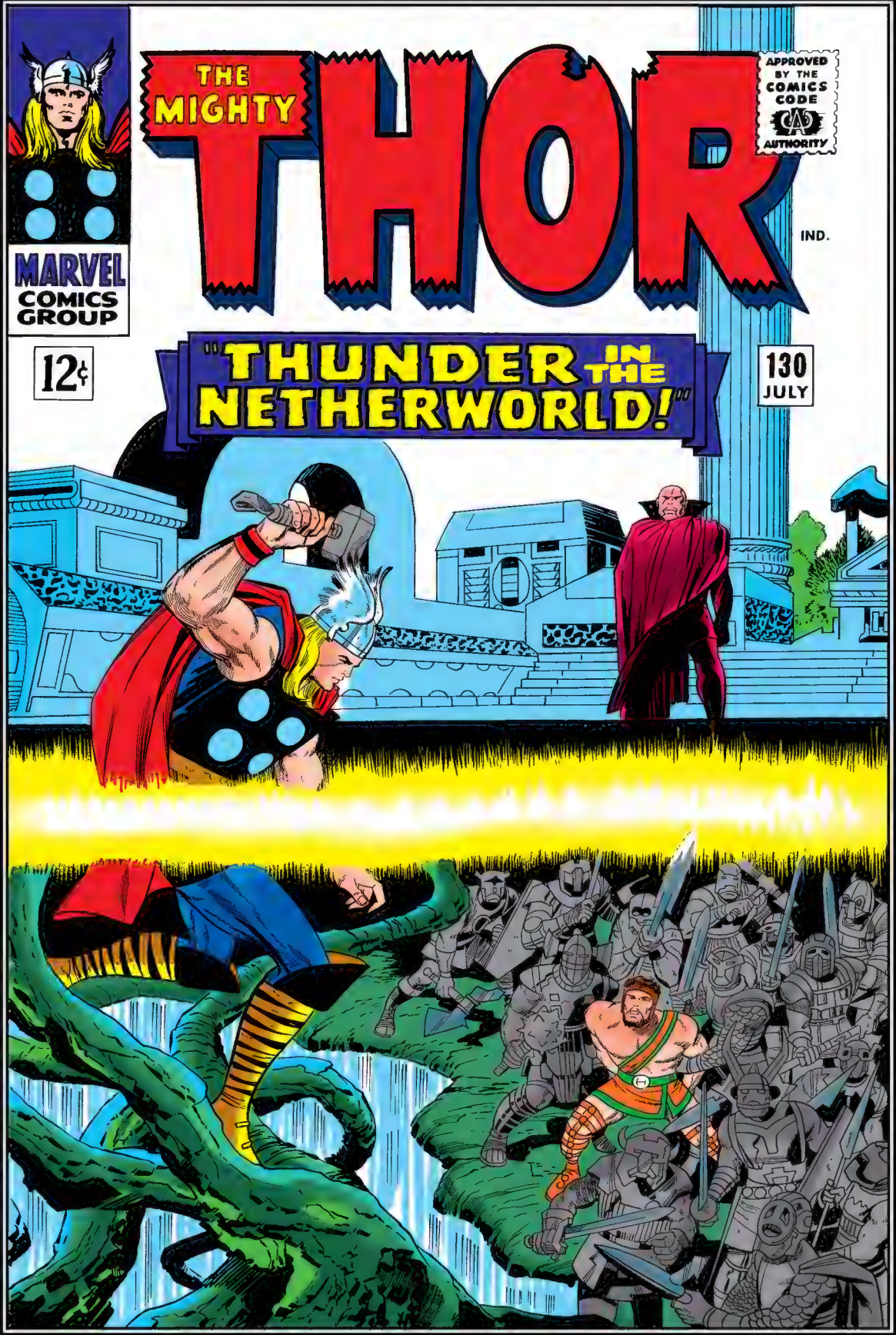
THE EYE IS MINE! NOW LET US STRIKE! NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE CAN STEM THE TIDE!! TODAY, IT IS MUSPELHEIM!! TOMORROW-- ASGARD ITSELF!!
'ERE I AM DONE, THE ENTIRE COSMOS SHALL PAY HOMAGE TO HAROKIN--WHILE ALL THAT LIVE SHALL BE TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MY INVINCIBLE HORDES!


NOW SHALL THE WARLOCK'S EYE CONQUER THIS FINAL, HELPLESS OUTPOST--!
WITH THOSE WORDS, HAROKIN PRESSES A HIDDEN STUD ON HIS GLEAMING HELMET, AND THEN--WONDER OF WONDERS--

GAZE YE DEEP INTO THE WARLOCK'S EYE --FOR NONE CAN RESIST ITS ENCHANTMENT!
GAZE, AS HAROKIN COMMANDS--AND THEN SUFFER THOU THE CONSEQUENCE!


INCREDIBLY, AS THE MYSTERIOUS BEAM SWEEPS THE BATTLEMENTS, THE HAPLESS DEFENDERS FALL LIKE STALKS OF WHEAT BEFORE AN INEXORABLY-SWINGING SCYTHE--!
5

THIS, THEN, IS THE MURDEROUS MENACE THAT AWAITS THE MIGHTY QUARTET WHICH, EVEN NOW, RIDES WITHIN EARSHOT OF THE GALLOPING HOOVES OF HAROKIN AND HIS MERCILESS HORDE--!
NEXT ISSUE:
"THE FATEFUL CHANGE!"


THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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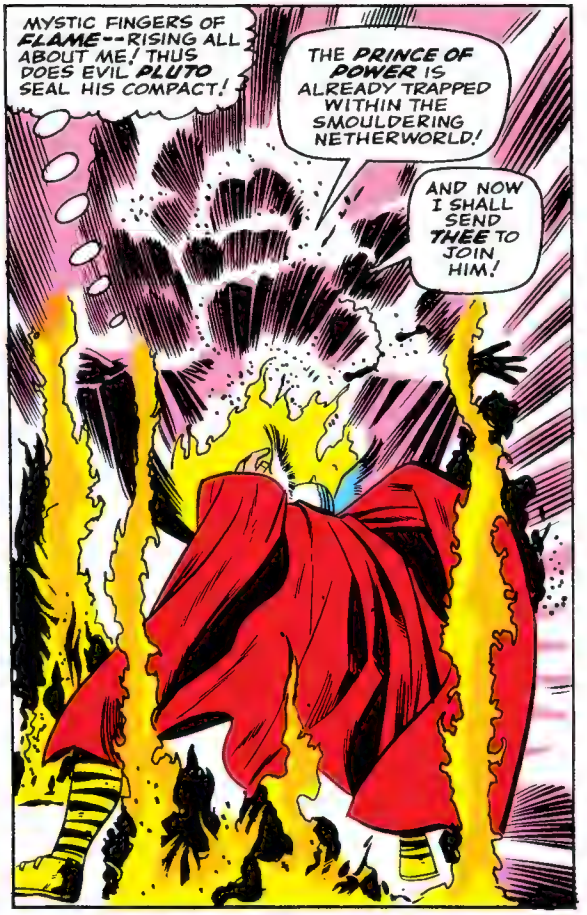
"THUNDER IN THE NETHERWORLD!"
130
JULY

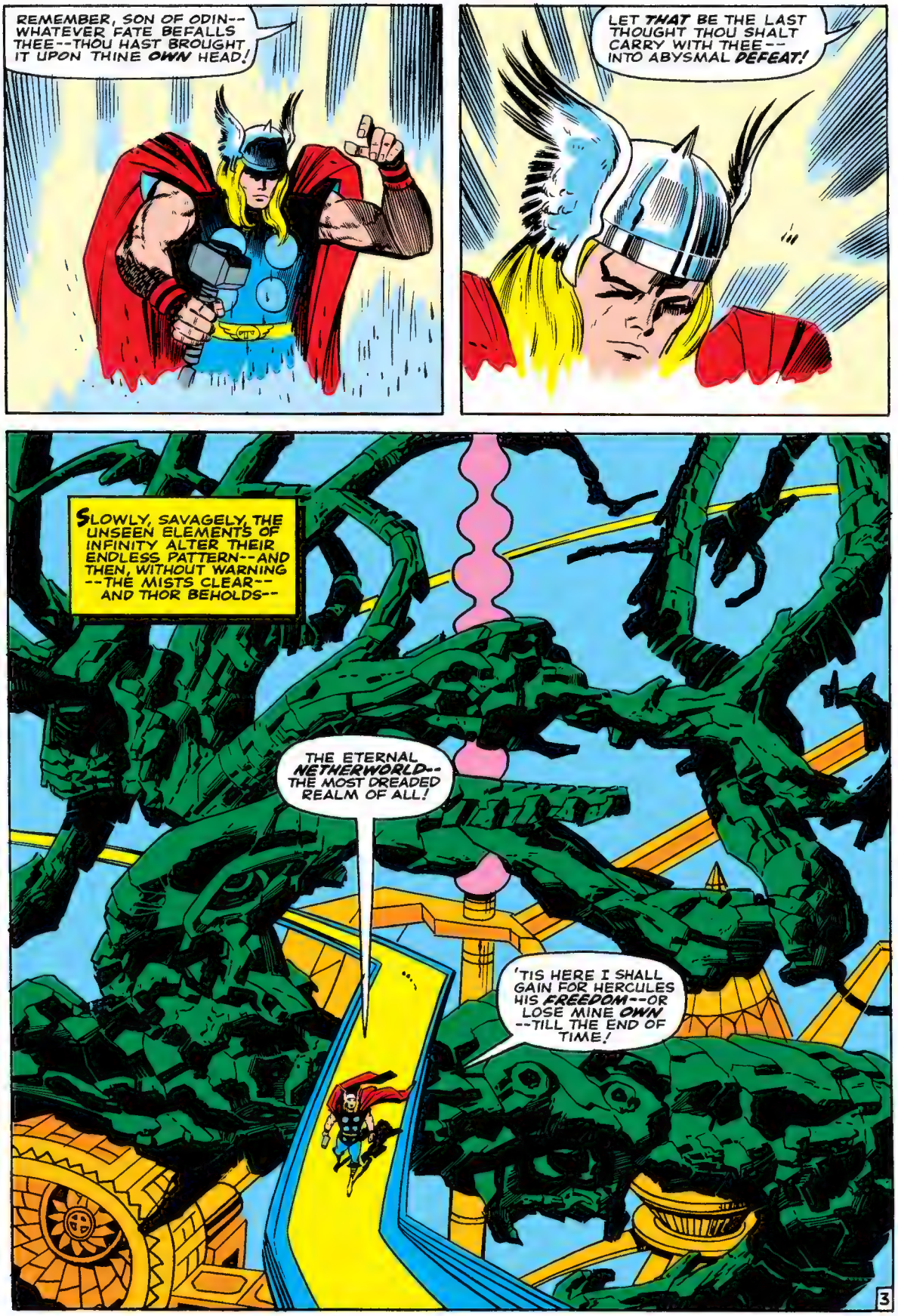
THE MIGHTY THOR!
"THUNDER IN THE NETHERWORLD!"
PLUTO! LET THY WARRIORS GATHER! LET THINE OWN AWESOME POWERS BE ASSEMBLED! THOR, SON OF ODIN, ACCEPTS THY CHALLENGE!
THE GOD OF THUNDER SHALL BATTLE TO SAVE HERCULES!
CONSIDER WELL, MIGHTY ONE! IF THOU SHOULDST FIND DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF MY SUBJECTS, THEN THOR MUST TAKE THE PLACE OF HERCULES AS RULER OF THE DREADED NETHERWORLD-- FOR ALL ETERNITY!
LET US PROCLAIM A PROUD PAEAN OF PRAISE FOR MARVEL'S MOST PROLIFIC PURVEYORS OF PEERLESS PAGEANTRY--
STAN THE MAN LEE, WRITER
JACK KING KIRBY, ARTIST
VINCE THE PRINCE COLLETTA, DELINEATOR
ARTIE PUSSYCAT SIMEK, LETTERER
1

IT IS SAID THAT THOU ART ENEMY OF HERCULES! WHAT CAUSES THEE, THEN, TO RISK THY LIFE AND LIBERTY FOR THE ARROGANT OLYMPIAN?
THOUGH THE SON OF ZEUS HATH DONE BATTLE WITH ME IN THE PAST, HE HATH ACQUITTED HIMSELF AS AN IMMORTAL SHOULD!
THE POWER OF HIS ARM DOTH MATCH THE VALOR IN HIS HEART! THOU DIDST NOT DEFEAT HIM IN FAIR COMBAT!
I KNOW NOT WHAT MADNESS IS UPON THEE--BUT THE DIE IS CAST!
IT IS NOT FIT THAT ONE SO VALIANT BE DOOMED--WITH NONE TO BE HIS CHAMPION!


MYSTIC FINGERS OF FLAME--RISING ALL ABOUT ME! THUS DOES EVIL PLUTO SEAL HIS COMPACT!
THE PRINCE OF POWER IS ALREADY TRAPPED WITHIN THE SMOULDERING NETHERWORLD!
AND NOW I SHALL SEND THEE TO JOIN HIM!

THOUGH HE IS FORBIDDEN TO DO BATTLE FOR HIS FREEDOM, THOR MUST FIGHT EVERY INCH OF THE WAY--
NEVER HAS A CAUSE BEEN MORE HOPELESS! NEVER HAS MAN OR IMMORTAL FACED SUCH AWESOME ODDS!

AND NOW--AWAY WITH THEE!
THE ENTRANCE TO MY REALM LIES THERE--AT THY FEET! ONE STEP FURTHER, AND THOU SHALT ENTER THE PORTALS OF BLAZING ENERGY--TO RETURN NEVERMORE!
ENTER, I SHALL! AND RETURN I SHALL!! THUS SPEAKS THE THUNDER GOD!


REMEMBER, SON OF ODIN--WHATEVER FATE BEFALLS THEE--THOU HAST BROUGHT IT UPON THINE OWN HEAD!
LET THAT BE THE LAST THOUGHT THOU SHALT CARRY WITH THEE--INTO ABYSMAL DEFEAT!
SLOWLY, SAVAGELY, THE UNSEEN ELEMENTS OF INFINITY ALTER THEIR ENDLESS PATTERN--AND THEN, WITHOUT WARNING --THE MISTS CLEAR-- AND THOR BEHOLDS--
THE ETERNAL NETHERWORLD-- THE MOST DREADED REALM OF ALL!
'TIS HERE I SHALL GAIN FOR HERCULES HIS FREEDOM--OR LOSE MINE OWN --TILL THE END OF TIME!
3

AND THEN, UTTERLY WITHOUT WARNING--
STAND FAST, INTERLOPER! I BE CERBERUS, GUARDIAN OF THE DEPTHS!!
NO FURTHER SHALT THOU GO--UNLESS IT BE ON THY KNEES, IN ABJECT SUBMISSION AND SURRENDER!
THE CRAVEN CERBERUS--WHOSE NAME IS SPOKEN IN WHISPERS THRUOUT THE UNIVERSE!
ALL WHO DWELL BELOW MUST CRINGE IN FEAR BEFORE MY MIGHT!
THE GOD OF THUNDER DEFERS TO NONE!
THEN THE GOD OF THUNDER DIES!
KOOM
NOT SO, THOU MURDEROUS ABHORRENCE! 'TIS AN ASGARDIAN WHO FACES THEE!
CLANNG
THEN LET IT BE AN ASGARDIAN WHO FALLS BENEATH MY HELMET'S RAY OF DESTRUCTION!
ZZZISSSS
THE SPEED OF THOR DOTH MAKE A MOCKERY OF THEE AND THY WEAPON!
AND NOW--PREPARE TO FEEL THE THUNDER OF MINE OWN HAMMER!
4

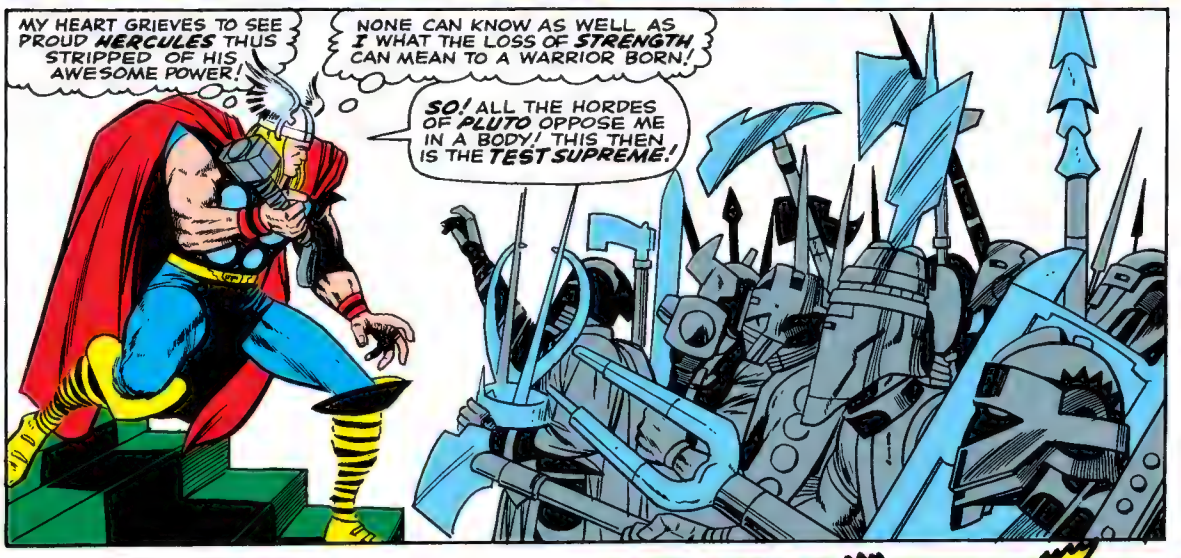
THINE EMPTY THREATS ARE LIKE UNTO THINE OWN SIZE, CERBERUS--
--TRULY AWESOME TO BEHOLD--YET, AS ODIN IS MY JUDGE, THEY BE WITHOUT SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE!
READY THYSELF THEN--
--WITH FOE SUCH AS THEE, THE HAND OF THOR SHALL NOT BE STAYED IN THE NAME OF MERCY--!
KA-KOOM!
AT THAT VERY INSTANT, AN INCALCULABLE DISTANCE AWAY, IN A NEW YORK APARTMENT, WE FIND--
SINCE REVEALING HIS TRUE IDENTITY TO ME, MY BELOVED HAS GONE TO ASGARD, TO RENOUNCE HIS IMMORTAL HERITAGE--SO THAT WE CAN BE MARRIED HERE ON EARTH!
WELL! I SEE THAT MY ROMANTIC ROOMMATE IS STILL OBSESSED WITH THOUGHTS OF THE GOD OF THUNDER!
BUT, HE SHOULD HAVE RETURNED TO ME LONG BEFORE THIS! AND YET--NOT A WORD SO FAR--!
OH, TANA--TANA! I NEVER THINK OF HIM AS THE THUNDER GOD! TO ME, HE'S MERELY THE ONLY MAN I COULD EVER SO DESPERATELY LOVE--!
LOVE!!
AN EMOTION FIT FOR ONLY FOOLS--AND WEAKLINGS!
GREEK MYTHS
5

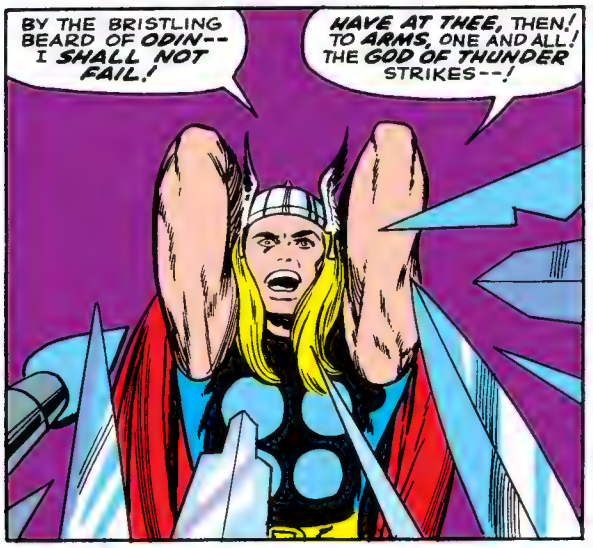
TANA! HOW CAN YOU SAY SUCH A THING? JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE! SOMEDAY, WHEN YOU--
STOP YOUR BABBLING, JANE FOSTER! I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!
WHERE I COME FROM, LOVE IS AS OUT-DATED AN EMOTION AS PITY, OR SORROW!
WHERE DO YOU COME FROM--??
WHEN YOU ANSWERED MY NEWSPAPER AD FOR A ROOMMATE, YOU NEVER DID TELL ME WHERE--OH!!
THAT WAS CARELESS OF ME, JANE FOSTER! I SHOULD NOT HAVE UTTERED A REMARK WHICH WOULD GIVE YOU CAUSE TO SUSPECT!
BUT NOW IT IS DONE--
--AND THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK!
WHAT YOU ARE SENSING NOW IS THE AURA OF MAJESTY WHICH I HAVE JUST UNFETTERED!
YOU CALL YOURSELF TANA NILE--YET, WHO--OR WHAT--ARE YOU??
THAT YOU SHALL LEARN IN DUE TIME! BUT FIRST, I MUST INSURE THAT YOU CANNOT ALTER MY PLANS!
LET YOUR KNEES GROW WEAK! LET THE STRENGTH EBB FROM YOUR BODY! FROM THIS MOMENT HENCE YOU ARE NO LONGER MISTRESS OF YOUR OWN WILL!
I MUST REMOVE YOU FROM THIS PLACE BEFORE THE MIGHTY THOR CAN REAPPEAR! FOR HE--OF ALL WHO LIVE--MUST NEVER LEARN MY SECRET!
THEREFORE, IT IS NECESSARY THAT YOU TAKE A LONG JOURNEY--ONE FROM WHICH YOU MUST NEVER RETURN!
BUT, WE HAVE DALLIED LONG ENOUGH ON THE SURFACE OF EARTH! WE MUST RETURN AGAIN TO THE SINISTER, STYGIAN NETHERWORLD--WHERE WE FIND--
I'LL NEVER REMAIN CAPTIVE HERE! HERCULES WILL FIGHT HIS WAY TO FREEDOM, AS I HAVE EVER DONE THRUOUT THE AGES!
LUCKY IT IS THAT THE PRINCE OF POWER HAS BEEN WEAKENED--
NOT SO THIS TIME, SON OF ZEUS! BY SIGNING THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT, YOUR OWN STRENGTH HAS BEEN ALL BUT SAPPED AWAY!
FOR, EVEN SO, OUR OWN ASSEMBLED MIGHT CANNOT FULLY SUBDUE HIM!
6

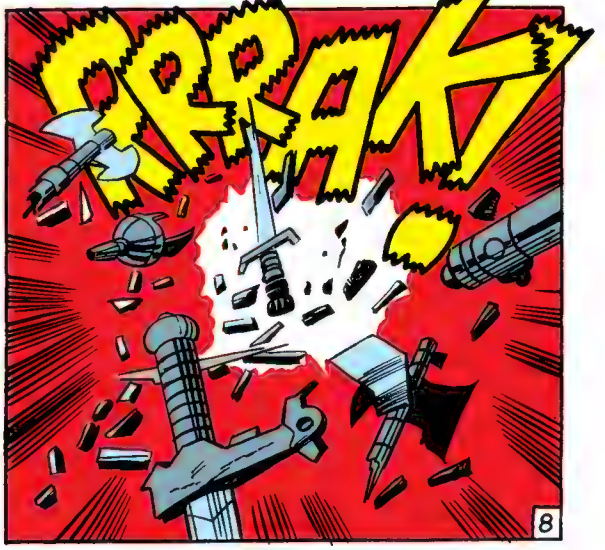
CEASE THY STRUGGLES, HERCULES!
ONCE THIS CROWN DOTH SIT UPON THY HEAD, THIS WORLD BECOMES THY DOMAIN--AND PRISON AS WELL--UNTIL TIME ITSELF SHALL EXIST NO MORE!
PLACE IT UPON HIM! THE LAW OF OLYMPUS FORBIDS THAT HE RESIST!
NAY! NAY! I AM A WARRIOR BORN! IF I MUST KNOW DEFEAT, LET IT BE IN BATTLE! LET IT BE AT THE HANDS OF A MORE POWERFUL FOE!
BUT NOT THIS! BY THE TOWERING SPIRES OF ETERNAL OLYMPUS--NOT THIS!
THE PRINCE OF POWER CANNOT RULE THE DREGS OF THE UNIVERSE!! HATH REASON FLED?? HATH JUSTICE PERISHED??
BUT THEN, A BOOMING COMMAND THUNDERS THRU THE GREAT CHAMBER--
STAND AWAY, SCIONS OF EVIL! THE SON OF ZEUS IS NOT YET THINE!
NOT SO LONG AS THE HAMMER OF THOR CAN STRIKE IN HIS BEHALF!
THE GOD OF THUNDER!! THEN, ONE THERE IS WILLING TO RISK ALL FOR HERCULES!
ONCE, I CALLED THEE ENEMY! NOW, UPON TRUER FRIEND MINE EYES HAVE NEVER FEASTED!
7

BUT, BEFORE THE POWERFUL OLYMPIAN CAN ADVANCE ANOTHER STEP, HE IS STOPPED IN HIS TRACKS BY THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE PACT HE HAS SIGNED!
DESIST, HERCULES! IT IS FORBIDDEN THAT THOU LIFT THY HAND IN BATTLE! ONLY ANOTHER MAY DO SO FOR THEE!

MIGHTY THOR--THOUGH I HAVE POWER ENOW TO SHAKE THE UNIVERSE--'TIS THEE WHO MUST STRIKE IN MY BEHALF!
I PRAY THAT THINE ARM BE STRONG, AND THINE EYE BE TRUE! KNOW YOU THAT HERCULES COULD WISH NO NOBLER CHAMPION!


MY HEART GRIEVES TO SEE PROUD HERCULES THUS STRIPPED OF HIS AWESOME POWER!
NONE CAN KNOW AS WELL AS I WHAT THE LOSS OF STRENGTH CAN MEAN TO A WARRIOR BORN!
SO! ALL THE HORDES OF PLUTO OPPOSE ME IN A BODY! THIS THEN IS THE TEST SUPREME!


BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN-- I SHALL NOT FAIL!
HAVE AT THEE, THEN! TO ARMS, ONE AND ALL! THE GOD OF THUNDER STRIKES--!

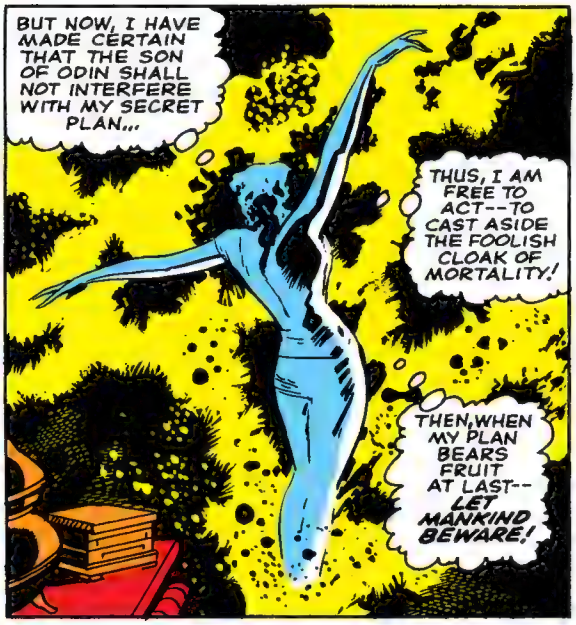

KRAK!

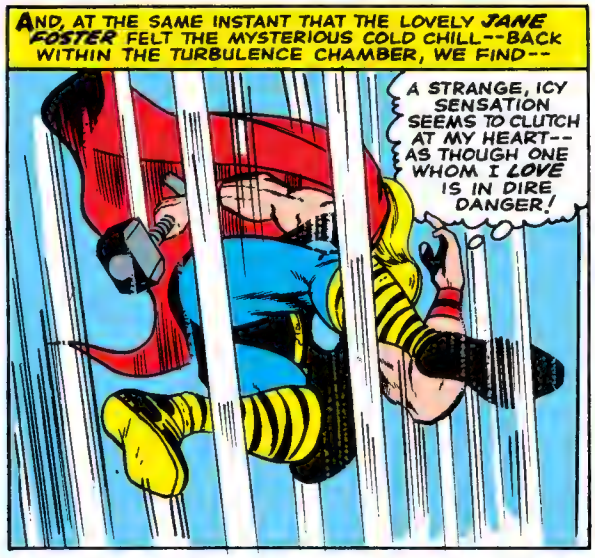
WE'D LIKE TO LETTER A LOT OF NEW SOUND EFFECTS IN THIS FRANKLY FABULOUS PANEL--HONEST! BUT, JUST BETWEEN US, WE CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE ONE THAT COULD DO JUSTICE TO THE IMPACT, THE FURY, THE SHEER... CATACLYSMIC POWER OF THOR'S ATTACK--!
BACK, YE HOSTS OF PILLAGE AND PLUNDER!! BACK, YE HARBINGERS OF DOOM AND DESPAIR! BACK, BACK, BEFORE THE SHATTERING WRATH OF THOR!
AND THEN, AT LAST--
THEY SCATTER-- LIKE SEEDS OF GRAIN BEFORE THE WINDS OF MARCH!
THEY DO BUT LEAVE THE FIELD OF BATTLE TO THE NEXT FORCE THAT I MUST OPPOSE!
AND YET, IN THEIR MANNER, I DO NOT SENSE DEFEAT!
AND, IN TRUTH, I DO BEHOLD IT NOW--!
THERE STANDS THE GOD OF THUNDER! GUNNER, UNLEASH THY BLAST! LET THE ASGARDIAN PERISH!
BREATHES NOT THE IMMORTAL WHO CAN WITHSTAND A COSMIC CANNON SHELL! THE BATTLE IS OURS! PLUTO DOTH TRIUMPH!
KA-OOM!
9

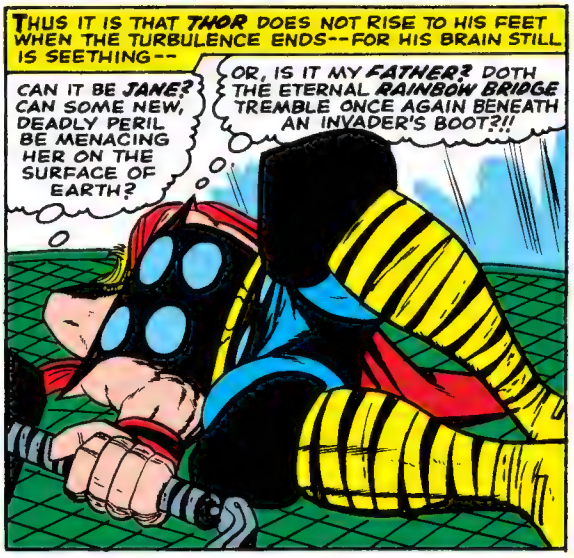
BUT, BEFORE THE FATAL BLAST CAN STRIKE ITS IMMORTAL TARGET, THE MIGHTY THOR MOVES AS ONLY A THUNDER GOD CAN--SEIZING AN ARMFUL OF HAPLESS FOES AND USING THEM AS ARMORED SHIELDS AGAINST THE DEADLY CANNON--!
THE SON OF ODIN IS NO WHIMPERING TARGET, TO BE STRUCK AT WILL BY SUCH AS THEE!
AND NOW, I MUST STRIKE BACK FORTHWITH, ERE ANOTHER VOLLEY CAN BE FIRED!
THE SHELL HATH STRUCK OUR OWN WARRIORS! THE COSMIC SLEEP SHALL ENFOLD THEM FOR A CENTURY!
ASGARD FOREVER!!
B-EEA-NG!
STRIKING THE AWESOME CANNON DEAD CENTER, THE HAMMER OF THOR RENDS IT IN TWAIN, AS THE MADLY-SPINNING IRON WHEELS INEXORABLY HURTLE THRU THE WALLS THEMSELVES--
ANOTHER CHALLENGE HATH BEEN MET! BUT, THE DEADLY PITFALLS OF THE NETHERWORLD ARE VERILY WITHOUT LIMIT!
EVEN NOW, THE MINIONS OF PLUTO CONTRIVE TO CRUSH ME WITH SOME NEW DEVICE!

AND, THE PROPHETIC MUSINGS OF THOR BEAR FRUIT A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--
THE WEAPONS OF THE NETHERWORLD ARE WELL-NIGH INEXHAUSTIBLE, THUNDER GOD--
--AS YOU SHALL FORTHWITH SEE!
THE LEVER HE PUSHES! WHAT DREAD DANGER DOTH THAT PORTEND?
THE FLOOR BENEATH MY FEET HATH DROPPED AWAY! A GLASS-LIKE CAGE NOW SURROUNDS ME!
I AM BEING SWIFTLY, SILENTLY LOWERED--BUT--TO WHENCE--?
PREPARE TO BE RENDERED HELPLESS, DOOMED ONE--FOR THOU ART FINALLY TRAPPED--WITHIN A SHATTERPROOF TURBULENCE CHAMBER!
PLUTO'S TURBULENCE TRAP!! ARTIFICIAL WIND PRESSURE DESIGNED TO SLAY ANYTHING THAT LIVES!
AND SO FAREWELL, IMMORTAL OF ASGARD --FAREWELL--FOR THE FINAL TIME!
WHOOOSH
WHILE, BACK IN NEW YORK--AT THAT SELFSAME SECOND--
ALL OF A SUDDEN--I FEEL A COLD CHILL--AS THOUGH AN ICY WIND IS CLUTCHING MY HEART!
PUT EVERY OTHER THOUGHT OUT OF YOUR MIND! YOU MUST OBEY ONLY ME!
NOW--DEPART!
I MUST OBEY--ONLY YOU--!
GO! AS FAR FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE! DO NOT LOOK BACK! DO NOT RETURN! THOR MUST NEVER FIND YOU AGAIN!
THOR MUST--NEVER--FIND ME--AGAIN--!
GO! GO! GO!
I DO NOT--UNDERSTAND--AND YET--I KNOW --I CAN NEVER--DISOBEY YOU--!
IF HE LIVES, I KNOW THAT THE THUNDER GOD WILL RETURN FOR THE ONE HE LOVES!
BUT, WHEN HE FINDS HER GONE, HE WILL LEAVE! HE WILL SEARCH THE FARTHEST REACHES OF SPACE FOR HER! AND THUS MUST IT BE!
THE FATE OF JANE FOSTER DOES NOT MATTER! SHE IS MERELY A PAWN--IN A FAR GREATER GAME OF CELESTIAL CHESS!
11

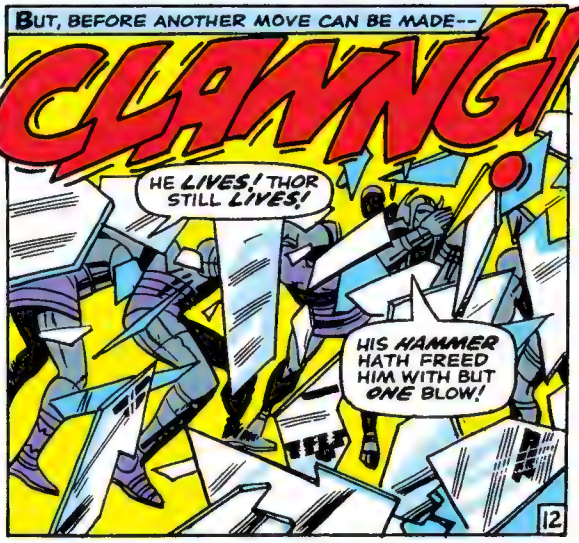
LOOK AT THEM, SCAMPERING IN THE STREET BELOW! POOR UNSUSPECTING MORTALS! SO PITIFULLY WEAK--SO TOTALLY HELPLESS!
OF ALL THOSE TEEMING MILLIONS, NOT ONE IS AWARE OF THE DARK DESTINY WHICH SO SURELY AWAITS THEM!

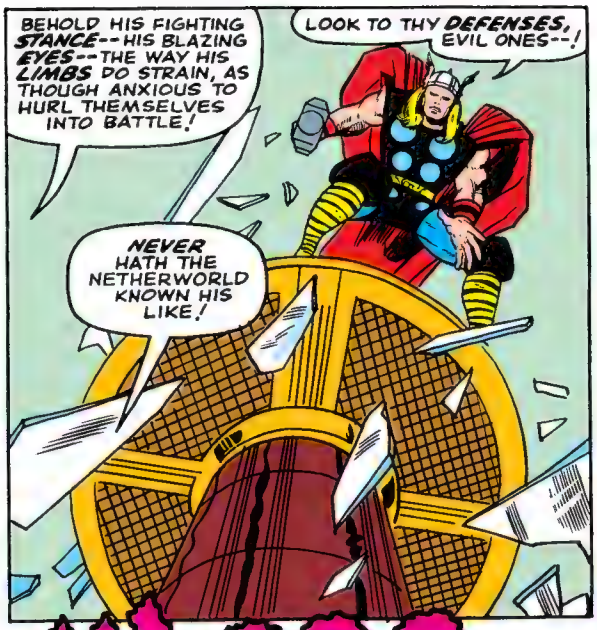

BUT NOW, I HAVE MADE CERTAIN THAT THE SON OF ODIN SHALL NOT INTERFERE WITH MY SECRET PLAN...
THUS, I AM FREE TO ACT--TO CAST ASIDE THE FOOLISH CLOAK OF MORTALITY!
THEN, WHEN MY PLAN BEARS FRUIT AT LAST--LET MANKIND BEWARE!


AND, AT THE SAME INSTANT THAT THE LOVELY JANE FOSTER FELT THE MYSTERIOUS COLD CHILL--BACK WITHIN THE TURBULENCE CHAMBER, WE FIND--
A STRANGE, ICY SENSATION SEEMS TO CLUTCH AT MY HEART--AS THOUGH ONE WHOM I LOVE IS IN DIRE DANGER!

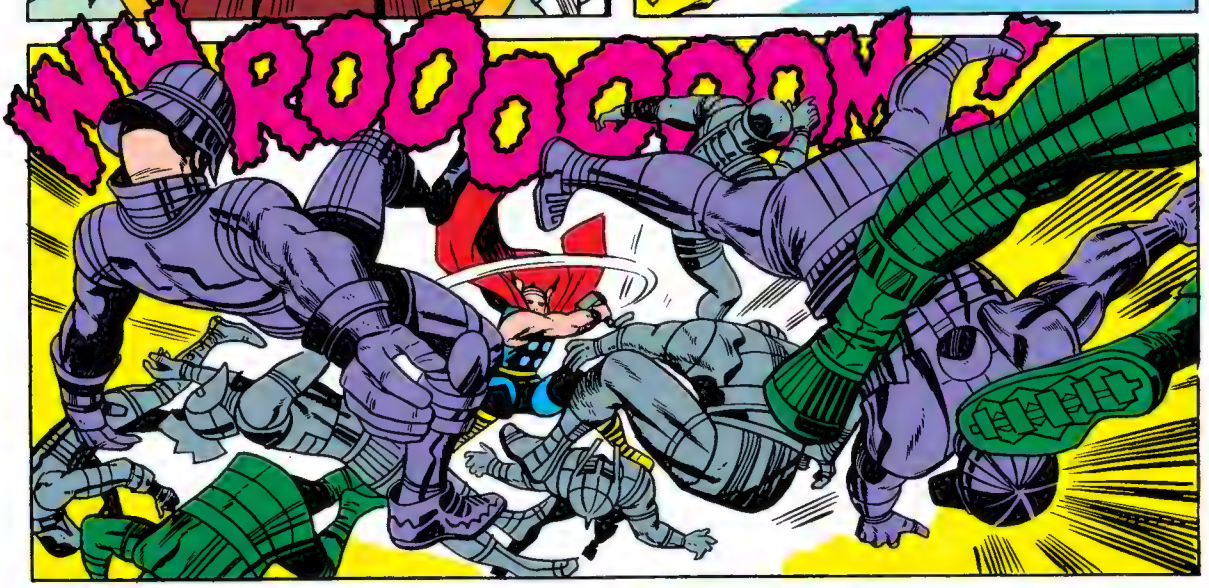

THUS IT IS THAT THOR DOES NOT RISE TO HIS FEET WHEN THE TURBULENCE ENDS--FOR HIS BRAIN STILL IS SEETHING--
CAN IT BE JANE? CAN SOME NEW, DEADLY PERIL BE MENACING HER ON THE SURFACE OF EARTH?
OR, IS IT MY FATHER? DOTH THE ETERNAL RAINBOW BRIDGE TREMBLE ONCE AGAIN BENEATH AN INVADER'S BOOT?!!

NAY! I MUST BANISH SUCH THOUGHTS FROM MY BRAIN! THERE IS BATTLE STILL TO BE WON, HERE IN THE KINGDOM OF PLUTO--!
THE THUNDER GOD LIES MOTIONLESS!
HE HATH BEEN OVER-COME!
SEIZE HIM! THE VICTORY IS OURS!

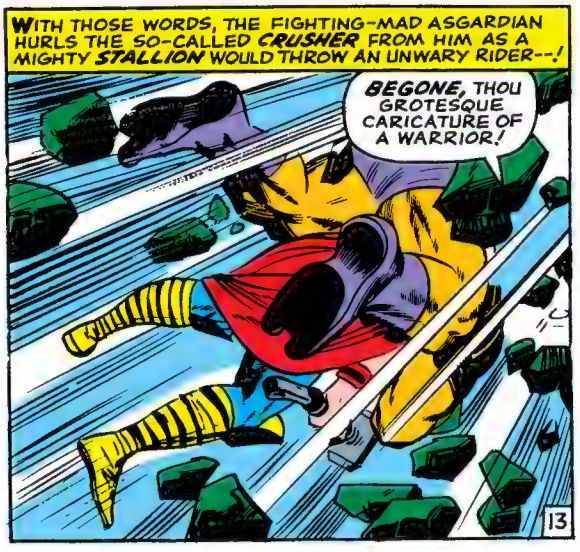

BUT, BEFORE ANOTHER MOVE CAN BE MADE--
CLANG!
HE LIVES! THOR STILL LIVES!
HIS HAMMER HATH FREED HIM WITH BUT ONE BLOW!

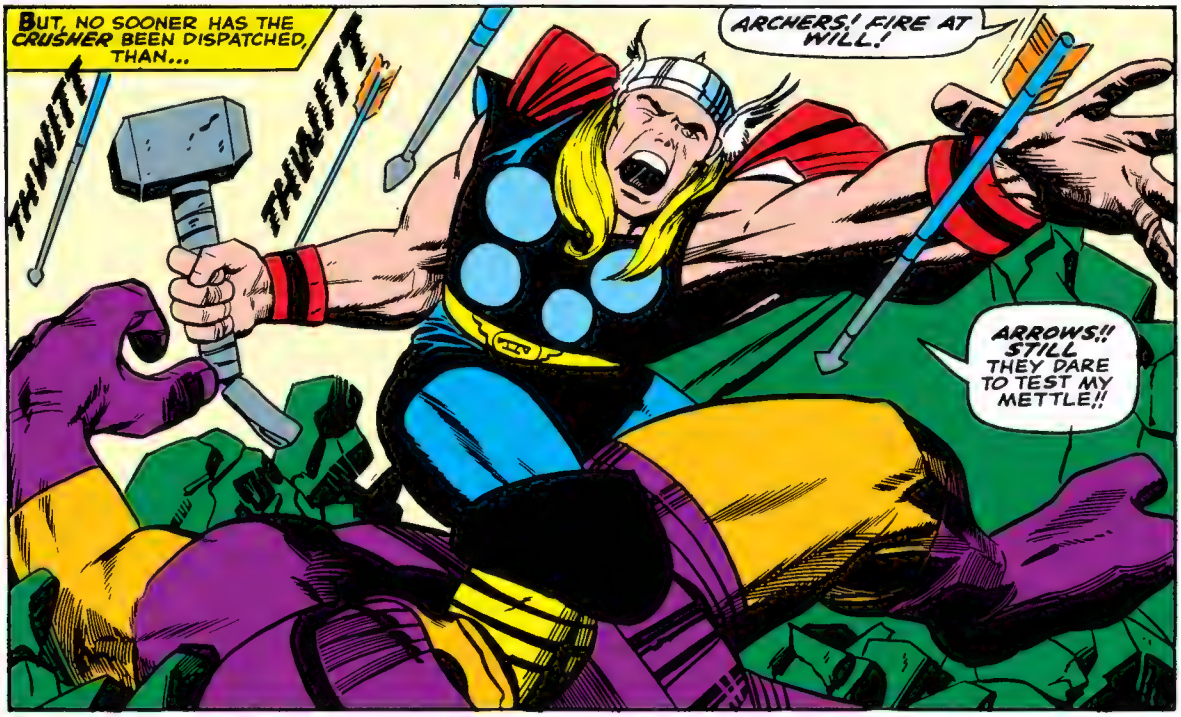

BEHOLD HIS FIGHTING STANCE--HIS BLAZING EYES--THE WAY HIS LIMBS DO STRAIN, AS THOUGH ANXIOUS TO HURL THEMSELVES INTO BATTLE!
LOOK TO THY DEFENSES, EVIL ONES--!
NEVER HATH THE NETHERWORLD KNOWN HIS LIKE!

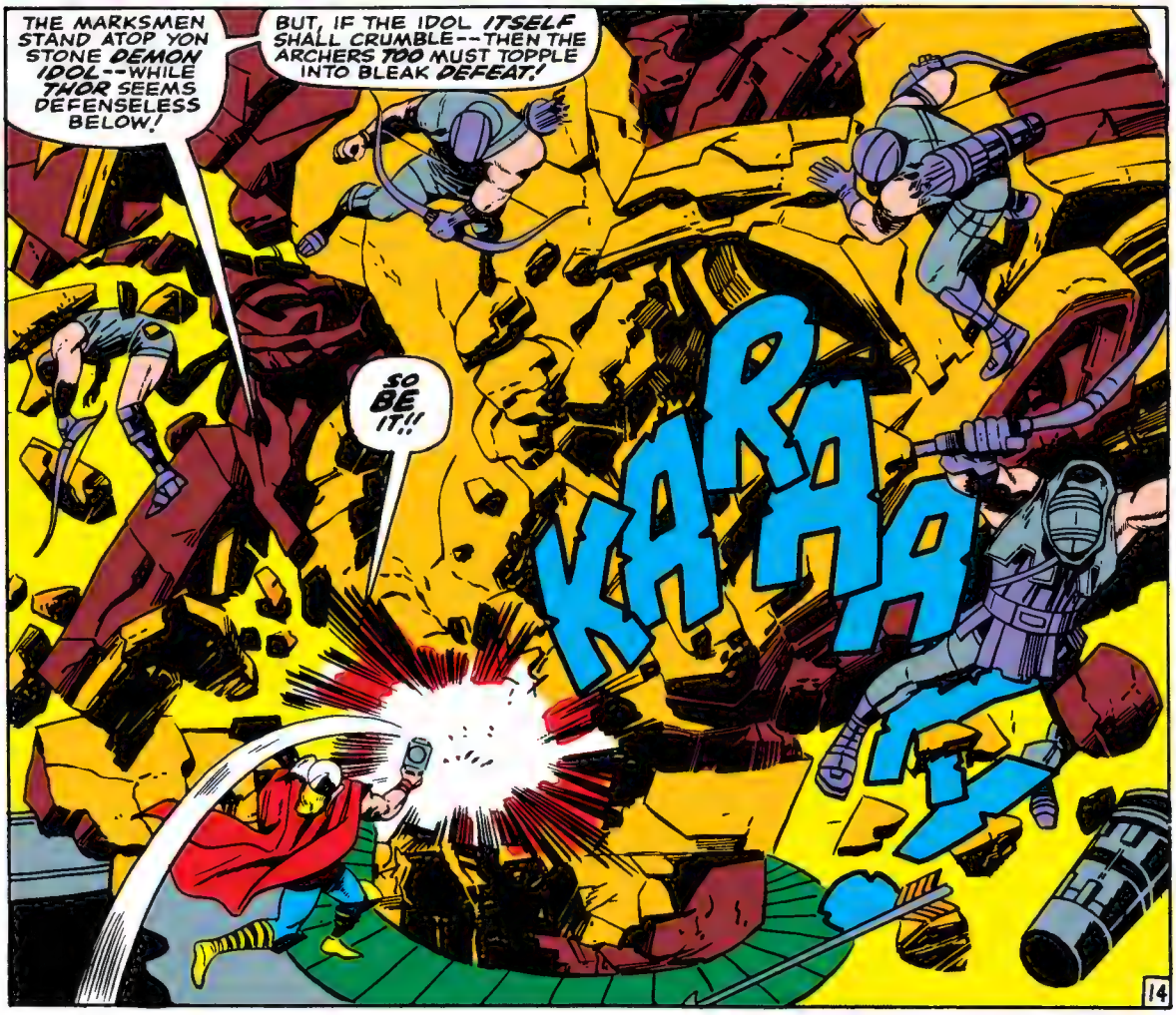
IN THE NAME OF IMPERIAL ASGARD--BY THE GRACE OF OMNIPOTENT ODIN--
NOW STRIKES THOR!!

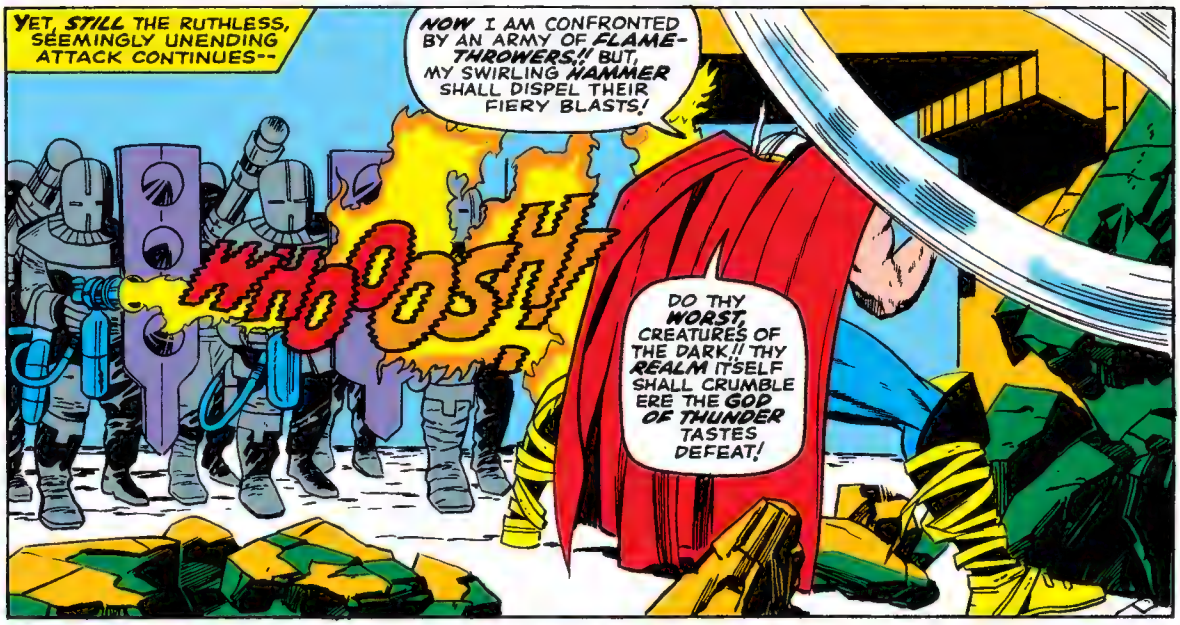

KROOOOOOM!!

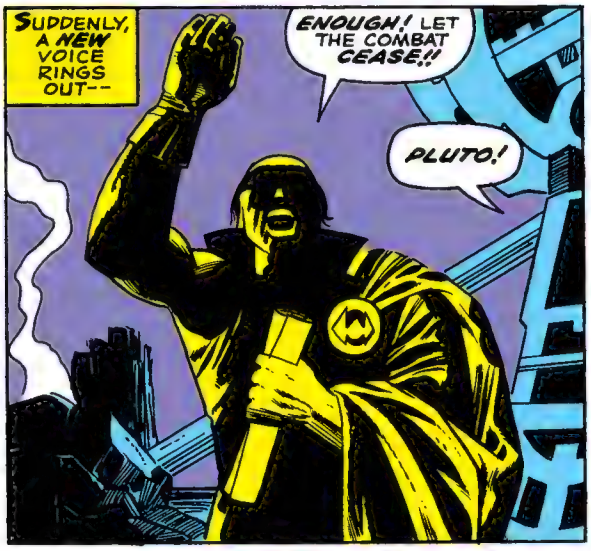
ARMS ALONE CANNOT STOP THE GOLDEN-HAIRED IMMORTAL! LET THE CRUSHER APPEAR!!
NOTHING CAN BREAK THE CRUSHER'S GRIP!!
HOLD THY TONGUE, INSOLENT ONE! THOU KNOWEST NOT THE POWER WHICH IS MINE!


WITH THOSE WORDS, THE FIGHTING-MAD ASGARDIAN HURLS THE SO-CALLED CRUSHER FROM HIM AS A MIGHTY STALLION WOULD THROW AN UNWARY RIDER--!
BEGONE, THOU GROTESQUE CARICATURE OF A WARRIOR!

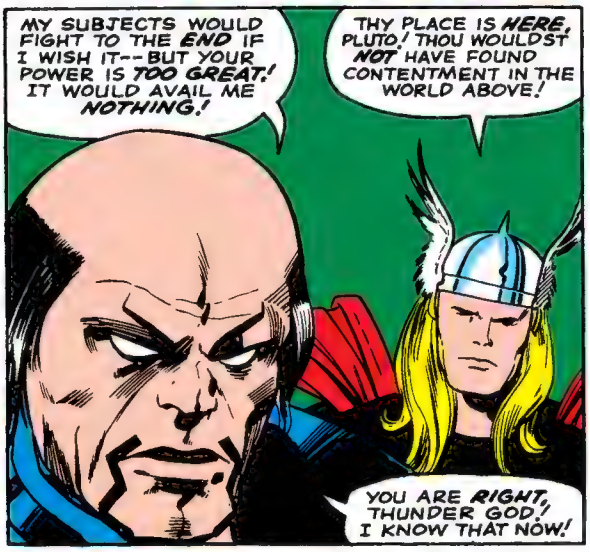

BUT, NO SOONER HAS THE CRUSHER BEEN DISPATCHED, THAN...
THWIT!!
THWIT!!
ARCHERS! FIRE AT WILL!
ARROWS!! STILL THEY DARE TO TEST MY METTLE!!


THE MARKSMEN STAND ATOP YON STONE DEMON IDOL--WHILE THOR SEEMS DEFENSELESS BELOW!
BUT, IF THE IDOL ITSELF SHALL CRUMBLE--THEN THE ARCHERS TOO MUST TOPPLE INTO BLEAK DEFEAT!
SO BE IT!!
KA-RA-A-A-K


YET, STILL THE RUTHLESS, SEEMINGLY UNENDING ATTACK CONTINUES--
NOW I AM CONFRONTED BY AN ARMY OF FLAME-THROWERS!! BUT, MY SWIRLING HAMMER SHALL DISPEL THEIR FIERY BLASTS!
WHOOOSH!
DO THY WORST, CREATURES OF THE DARK!! THY REALM ITSELF SHALL CRUMBLE ERE THE GOD OF THUNDER TASTES DEFEAT!


SUDDENLY, A NEW VOICE RINGS OUT--
ENOUGH! LET THE COMBAT CEASE!!
PLUTO!

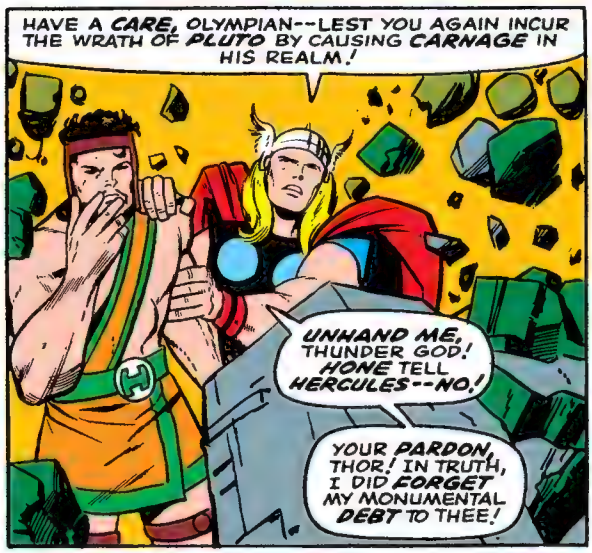
WITHIN A MATTER OF MINUTES, YOU HAVE TORN DOWN WHAT IT HAS TAKEN ME AGES TO CREATE!
I CAN WITNESS NO FURTHER DESTRUCTION TO THE REALM I HAVE RULED SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME!

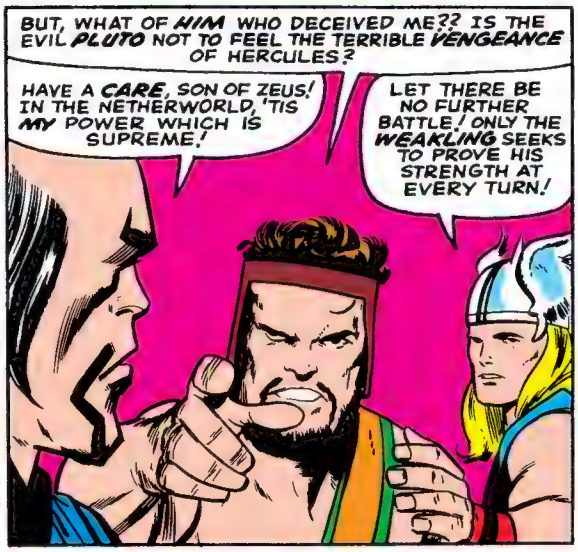

MY SUBJECTS WOULD FIGHT TO THE END IF I WISH IT--BUT YOUR POWER IS TOO GREAT! IT WOULD AVAIL ME NOTHING!
THY PLACE IS HERE, PLUTO! THOU WOULDST NOT HAVE FOUND CONTENTMENT IN THE WORLD ABOVE!
YOU ARE RIGHT, THUNDER GOD! I KNOW THAT NOW!

I SHALL FREE THEE OF THY FATE, OLYMPIAN!
THEN--MIGHTY THOR HAS TRIUMPHED?!!
AY! THE ORDEAL IS ENDED!

BEHOLD! WITH MY OWN HANDS, I TEAR THE OLYMPIAN CONTRACT! PLUTO SHALL REMAIN LORD OF THE NETHERWORLD!
GOD OF THUNDER--ONCE I CALLED THEE UNWORTHY TO BATTLE HERCULES! TRULY, THE MADNESS MUST HAVE BEEN UPON MY BROW!
'TIS OF NO FURTHER CONSEQUENCE!

BUT NOW--I AM FREE! FREE!
ALREADY, I FEEL THE INVISIBLE BONDS OF ZEUS SLIP FROM MY LIMBS!
MY STRENGTH IS RETURNED TO ME!
KRAK!
THROK!
HERCULES IS PRINCE OF POWER ONCE MORE!


HAVE A CARE, OLYMPIAN--LEST YOU AGAIN INCUR THE WRATH OF PLUTO BY CAUSING CARNAGE IN HIS REALM!
UNHAND ME, THUNDER GOD! HONE TELL HERCULES--NO!
YOUR PARDON, THOR! IN TRUTH, I DID FORGET MY MONUMENTAL DEBT TO THEE!


BUT, WHAT OF HIM WHO DECEIVED ME?? IS THE EVIL PLUTO NOT TO FEEL THE TERRIBLE VENGEANCE OF HERCULES?
HAVE A CARE, SON OF ZEUS! IN THE NETHERWORLD, 'TIS MY POWER WHICH IS SUPREME!
LET THERE BE NO FURTHER BATTLE! ONLY THE WEAKLING SEEKS TO PROVE HIS STRENGTH AT EVERY TURN!

THY WORDS HAVE WISDOM, THOR--EVEN AS THY LIMBS HAVE POWER ENOW TO MAKE HERCULES PAUSE!
HENCEFORTH, I CALL THEE FRIEND!
AND I, THEE!
16

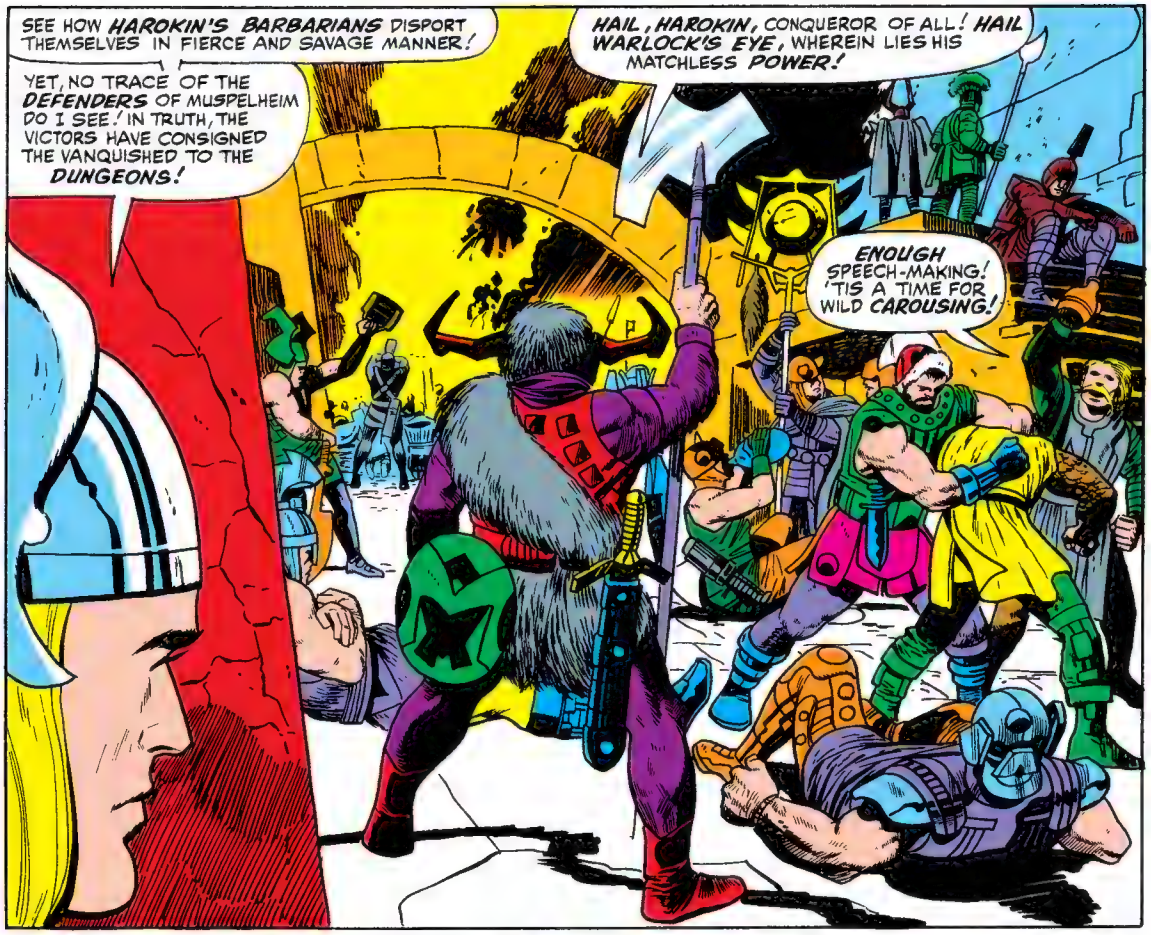
WHAT RIOTOUS REVELS WE SHALL ENJOY TOGETHER! WHAT BATTLES WE SHALL SHARE, AT EACH OTHER'S SIDE!
ALAS, OLYMPIAN --REVELS ARE NOT FOR SUCH AS ME--
AND, MY HAMMER SWINGS ONLY FOR JUSTICE-- NEVER FOR THE THRILL OF BATTLE ALONE!

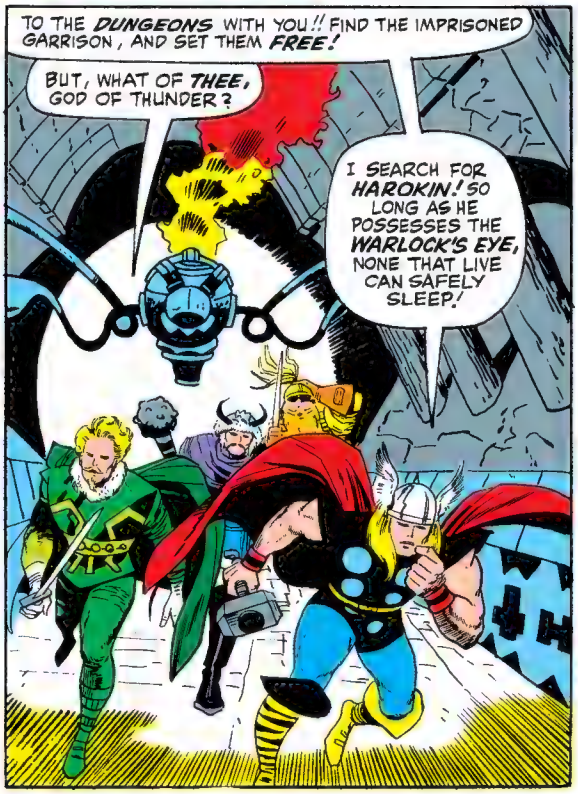
BUT, WHAT GOOD THEN TO BE A GOD?
THY CARELESS QUERY, HERCULES, IS FAR MORE PROFOUND THAN THOU SUSPECT!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE STRANGE SECRET OF TANA NILE!
WE HAVE SPOKEN!

"THE FATEFUL CHANGE!"

MY GLORIOUS RECORD PROVES THAT VOLSTAGG KNOWS NOT THE MEANING OF FEAR! BUT, WHY DO WE RACE SO QUICKLY INTO A LAND WHERE DEATH LURKS EVERYWHERE?
YON CITY OF MUSPELHEIM HAS FALLEN TO THE HORDES OF HAROKIN! WE MUST LIBERATE THE LAND WHILE WE CAN!
TRUE, HOGUN! YET, I PERCEIVE NO SIGNS OF BATTLE! HOW DID HAROKIN ACHIEVE HIS CONQUEST?
THERE CAN BE BUT ONE ANSWER, FANDRAL---
---HAROKIN HAS SEIZED THE ENCHANTED WARLOCK'S EYE! POSSESSING IT, NONE CAN STAND AGAINST HIM!

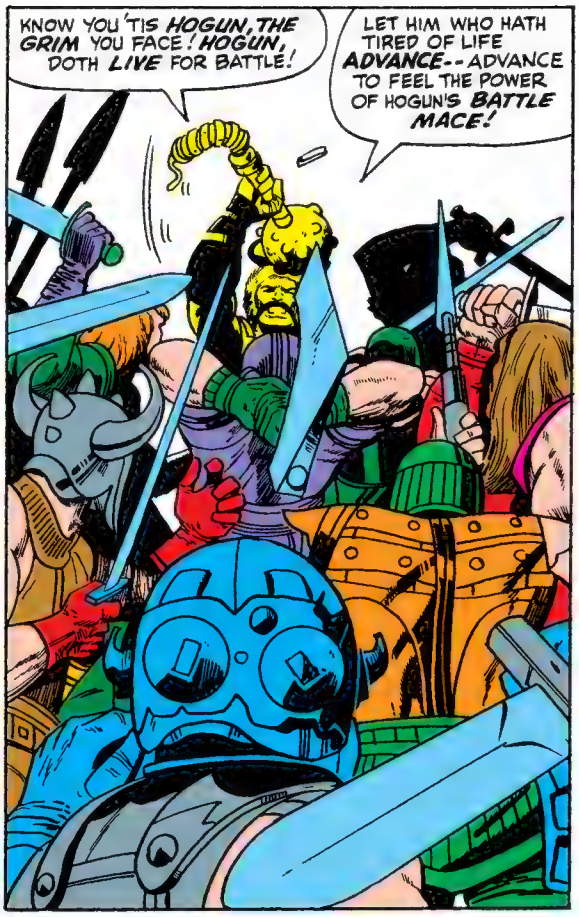
SCRIPT: STAN LEE
ART: JACK KIRBY
INKING: VINCE COLLETTA
LETTERING: SAM ROSEN
COSTUMES: ASGARD HABERDASHERY


SEE HOW HAROKIN'S BARBARIANS DISPORT THEMSELVES IN FIERCE AND SAVAGE MANNER!
YET, NO TRACE OF THE DEFENDERS OF MUSPELHEIM DO I SEE! IN TRUTH, THE VICTORS HAVE CONSIGNED THE VANQUISHED TO THE DUNGEONS!
HAIL, HAROKIN, CONQUEROR OF ALL! HAIL WARLOCK'S EYE, WHEREIN LIES HIS MATCHLESS POWER!
ENOUGH SPEECH-MAKING! 'TIS A TIME FOR WILD CAROUSING!


TO THE DUNGEONS WITH YOU!! FIND THE IMPRISONED GARRISON, AND SET THEM FREE!
BUT, WHAT OF THEE, GOD OF THUNDER?
I SEARCH FOR HAROKIN! SO LONG AS HE POSSESSES THE WARLOCK'S EYE, NONE THAT LIVE CAN SAFELY SLEEP!

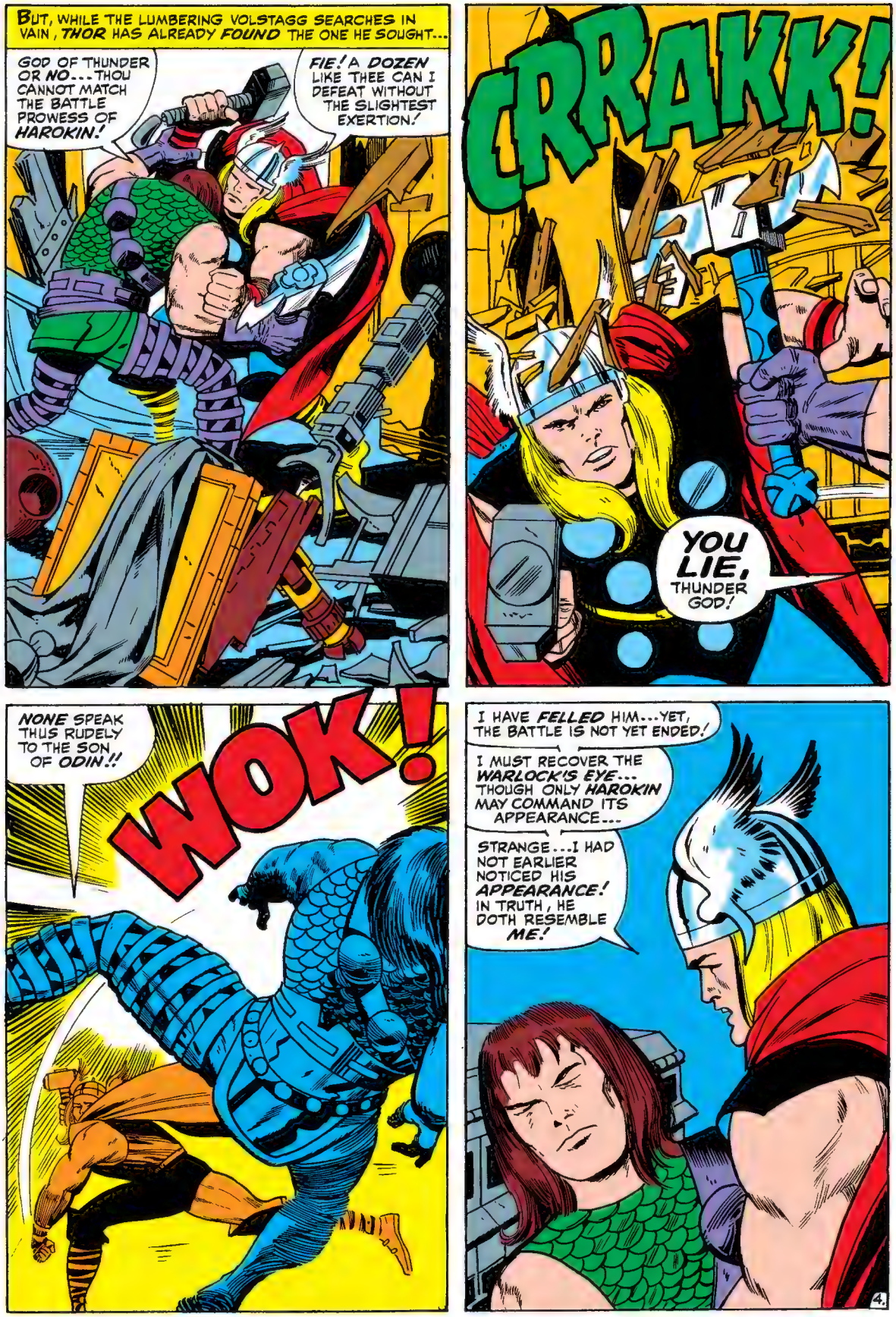
GRIM HOGUN... BEHOLD! WE HAVE FOUND THE VANQUISHED GARRISON!
BE STOUT OF HEART, CAPTIVE ONES... VALIANT VOLSTAGG IS HERE!
MOVE YE THEN!
THE JAILER HATH BEEN TRULY DISPATCHED!

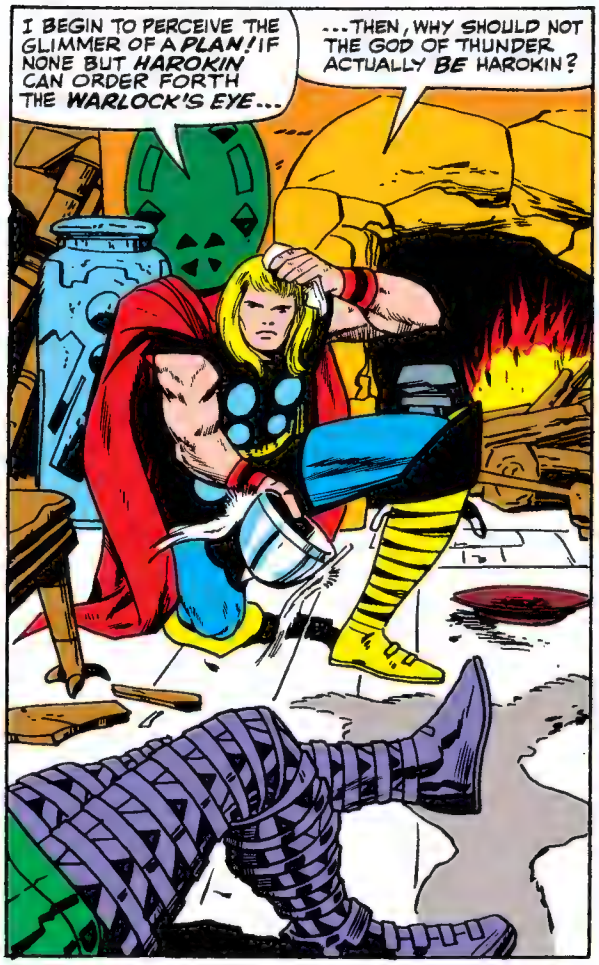
HOGUN! BEHIND THEE! WE HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED! THE LEGIONS OF HAROKIN ATTACK!
DEATH TO THE INTRUDER! NOT AN ASGARDIAN SHALL REMAIN ALIVE!
'TIS THOU WHO SHALL TASTE DEFEAT.. THOUGH THY NUMBERS BE ENDLESS!


KNOW YOU 'TIS HOGUN, THE GRIM YOU FACE! HOGUN, DOTH LIVE FOR BATTLE!
LET HIM WHO HATH TIRED OF LIFE ADVANCE--ADVANCE TO FEEL THE POWER OF HOGUN'S BATTLE MACE!

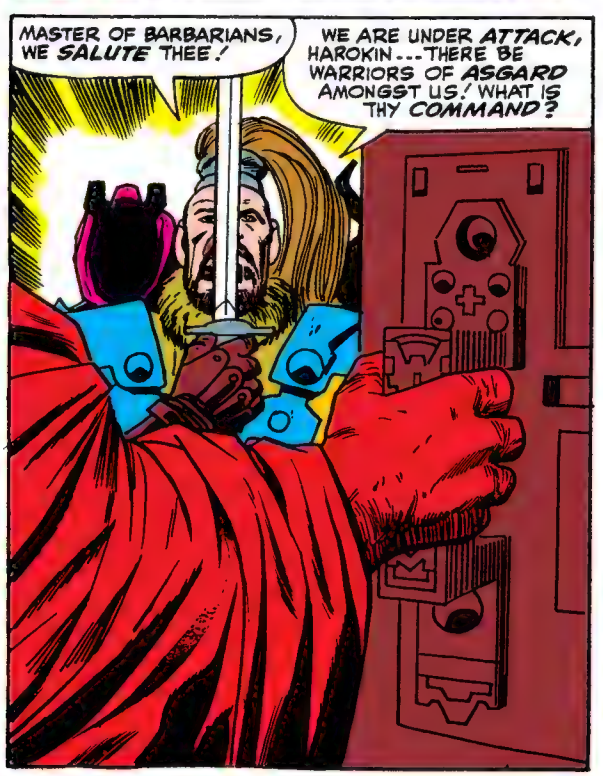
NAY, GRIM ONE! THOU MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE COMBAT TO THYSELF! FANDRAL WOULD SHARE THE EXALTATION WITH THEE!
THOUGH MY EVERY LIMB ACHES TO JOIN THEE, I MUST MAKE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE AND TURN MY ATTENTION ELSEWHERE!
FOR ANOTHER HATH NEED OF VOLSTAGG'S AWESOME MIGHT!

SHOULDST THOU NEED HELP, DASHING FANDRAL--- SAY BUT TO THYSELF: "WHAT WOULD MIGHTY VOLSTAGG DO IF HE WERE SORELY PRESSED?"
NOW MUST I HASTEN TO THE SIDE OF THE GOD OF THUNDER!
WE SHALL FOLLOW THEE SOON, GARGANTUAN ONE! NONE IN THIS MOTLEY GROUP ARE WORTHY METTLE FOR OUR SKILL!
3.


BUT, WHILE THE LUMBERING VOLSTAGG SEARCHES IN VAIN, THOR HAS ALREADY FOUND THE ONE HE SOUGHT...
GOD OF THUNDER OR NO...THOU CANNOT MATCH THE BATTLE PROWESS OF HAROKIN!
FIE! A DOZEN LIKE THEE CAN I DEFEAT WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST EXERTION!
CRRAKK!
YOU LIE, THUNDER GOD!
NONE SPEAK THUS RUDELY TO THE SON OF ODIN!!
WOK!
I HAVE FELLED HIM...YET, THE BATTLE IS NOT YET ENDED!
I MUST RECOVER THE WARLOCK'S EYE... THOUGH ONLY HAROKIN MAY COMMAND ITS APPEARANCE...
STRANGE...I HAD NOT EARLIER NOTICED HIS APPEARANCE! IN TRUTH, HE DOTH RESEMBLE ME!
4.


I BEGIN TO PERCEIVE THE GLIMMER OF A PLAN! IF NONE BUT HAROKIN CAN ORDER FORTH THE WARLOCK'S EYE...
---THEN, WHY SHOULD NOT THE GOD OF THUNDER ACTUALLY BE HAROKIN?

THUS, MOMENTS LATER---
WE MUST TELL HAROKIN OF THE DANGER THAT THREATENS OUR LEGIONS!
THERE IS NOT A MINUTE TO LOSE!
IF TWO ASGARDIANS BE AMONG US ---HOW MANY OTHERS MAY ALSO BE LYING IN WAIT?


MASTER OF BARBARIANS, WE SALUTE THEE!
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK, HAROKIN---THERE BE WARRIORS OF ASGARD AMONGST US! WHAT IS THY COMMAND?

THERE CAN BE BUT ONE RESPONSE---
WE MUST EMPLOY THE WARLOCK'S EYE! WITH SUCH A WEAPON, EVEN ASGARD SHALL CRUMBLE BENEATH OUR HEELS!
NEXT ISSUE: "THE WARLOCK'S EYE!"
5.

Putting the funny back in funny books, *Not Brand Echh* debuted in 1967 and proceeded to lampoon the competition (distinguished and otherwise) as well as each and every "Marble Comics" super hero.

This madcap bonus comes courtesy of the batty Bullpen's *Not Brand Echh* #3 (Oct. 1967).

"The Origin of Sore, Son of Shmodin!"

Writer: Stan Lee

Penciler: Jack Kirby

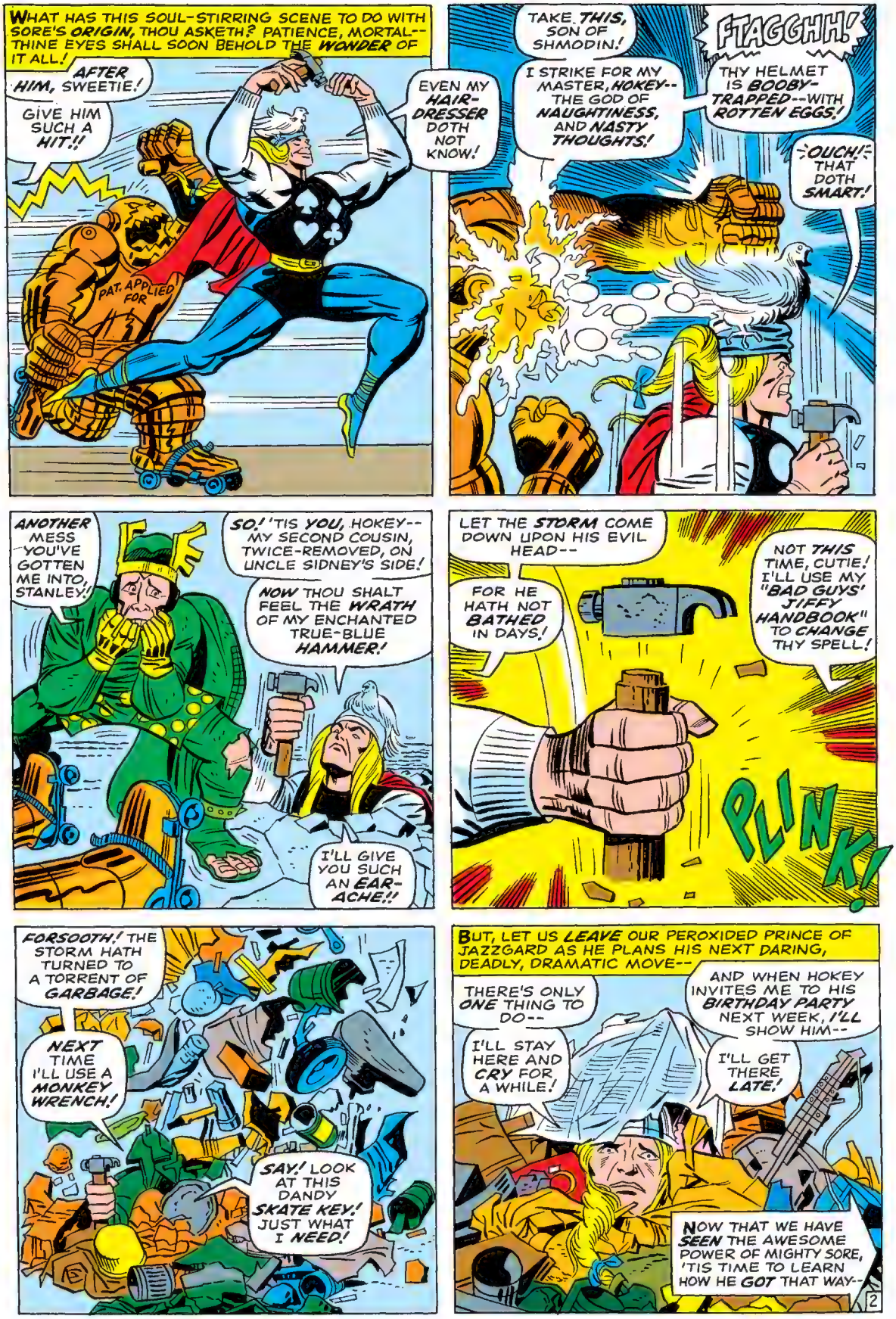
Inker: Frank Giacoia

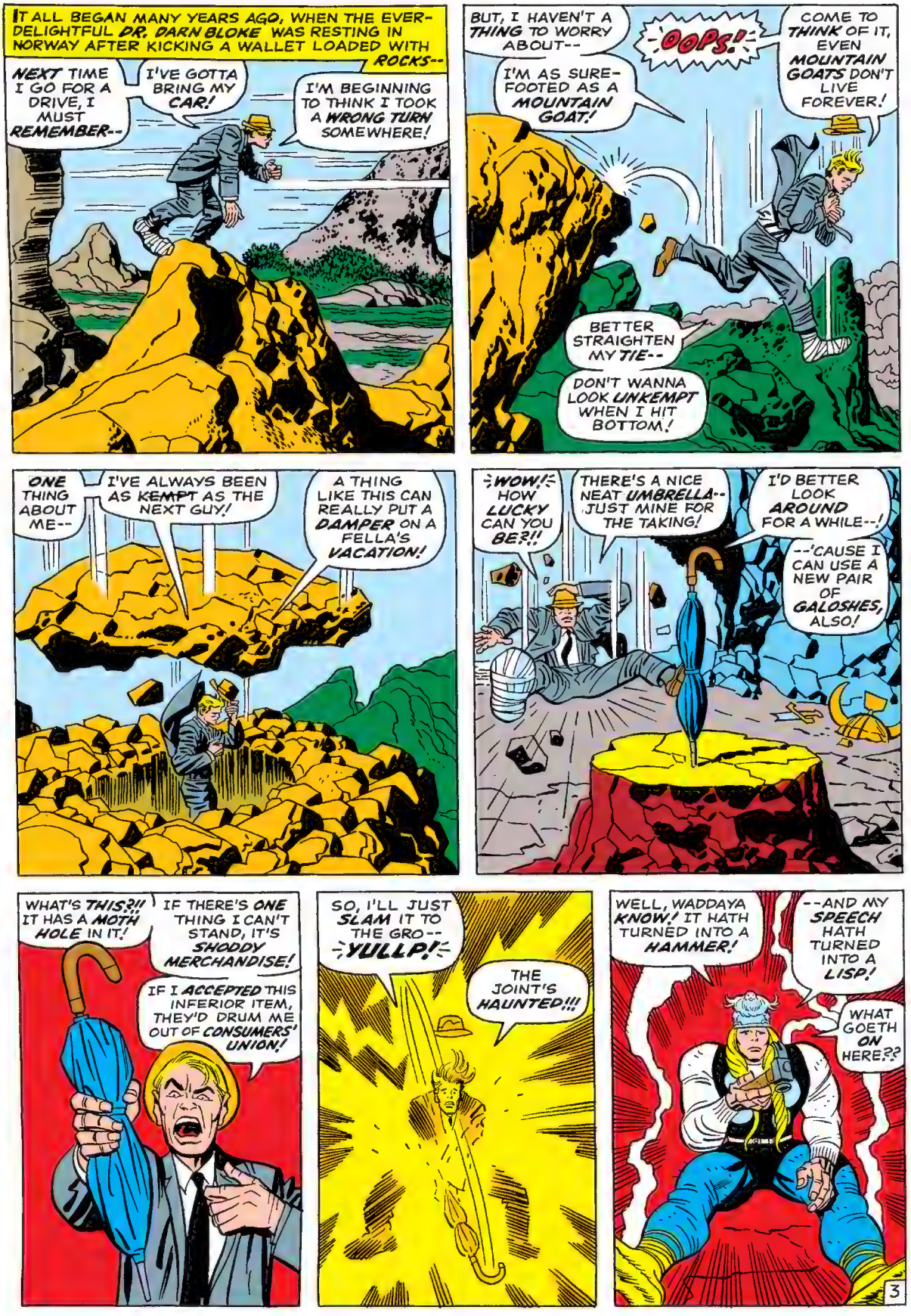
Letterer: Art Simek

Color Reconstruction: Jerron Quality Color

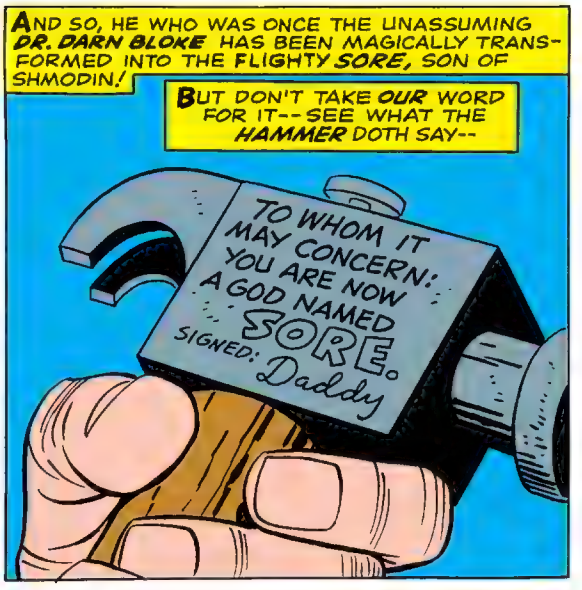
BIG BATTY ORIGIN ISSUE!!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢ IND.
3 OCT
WHO SAYS A COMIC BOOK HAS TO BE GOOD??
NOT BRAND ECHH
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
YOU ASKED FOR THE ORIGINS OF: CHARLIE AMERICA!
THE INEDIBLE BULK!
THE MIGHTY SORE!
AND BOY! WILL YOU BE SORRY YOU ASKED!

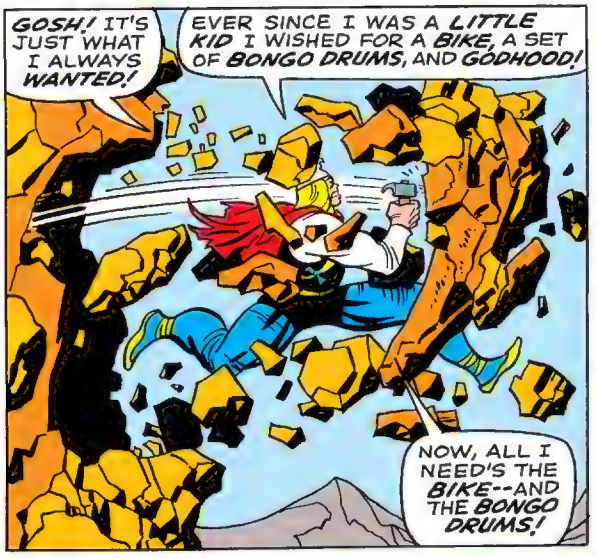
HE'S MIGHTY SORE!
"THE ORIGIN OF SORE, SON OF SHMODIN!"
ONWARD, FOR JAZZGARD!
HATE HATRED!
STOP
GO
CAUTION
TILT
AT LAST WE PRESENT THE STARTLING ANSWER TO THE BURNING QUESTION: WHERE DID SORE COME FROM? (AND WHO ASKED FOR HIM, ANYWAY?)
'TIS TIME TO STRIKE! GO GIT 'IM, SWEETIE!
HIT 'IM ONE FOR HOKEY!
JUICE BOX
SAPULOID (A.C. ONLY)
A PEERLESS PUT-ON BY MIGHTY MARBLE'S POWER-MAD PIXIES: SMILIN' JOLLY STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY
INKED BY: FRANK GIACOIA
LETTERED BY: ARTIE SIMEK
HAIR-STYLING BY: FORBUSH CLASSY CURLERS, LTD.
AND NOW, AWAAAAY WE GOETH--
1

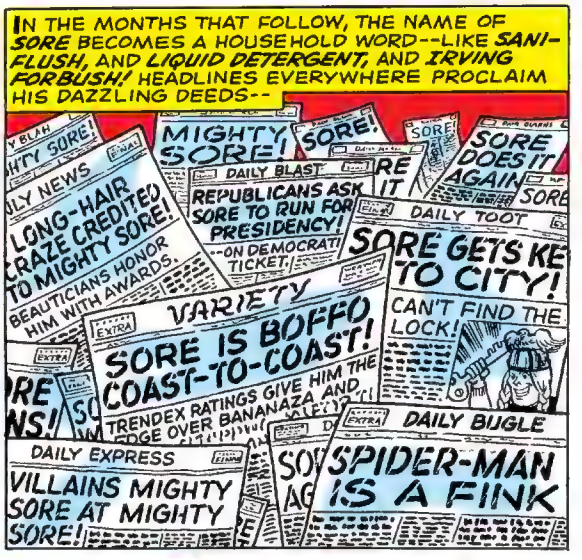

WHAT HAS THIS SOUL-STIRRING SCENE TO DO WITH SORE'S ORIGIN, THOU ASKETH? PATIENCE, MORTAL--THINE EYES SHALL SOON BEHOLD THE WONDER OF IT ALL!
AFTER HIM, SWEETIE!
GIVE HIM SUCH A HIT!!
PAT. APPLIED FOR
EVEN MY HAIR-DRESSER DOTH NOT KNOW!
TAKE THIS, SON OF SHMODIN!
FTAGGHH!
I STRIKE FOR MY MASTER, HOKEY--THE GOD OF NAUGHTINESS, AND NASTY THOUGHTS!
THY HELMET IS BOOBY-TRAPPED--WITH ROTTEN EGGS!
-OUCH!- THAT DOTH SMART!
ANOTHER MESS YOU'VE GOTTEN ME INTO, STANLEY!
SO! 'TIS YOU, HOKEY--MY SECOND COUSIN, TWICE-REMOVED, ON UNCLE SIDNEY'S SIDE!
NOW THOU SHALT FEEL THE WRATH OF MY ENCHANTED TRUE-BLUE HAMMER!
I'LL GIVE YOU SUCH AN EAR-ACHE!!
LET THE STORM COME DOWN UPON HIS EVIL HEAD--
FOR HE HATH NOT BATHED IN DAYS!
NOT THIS TIME, CUTIE! I'LL USE MY "BAD GUYS' JIFFY HANDBOOK" TO CHANGE THY SPELL!
PLINK!
FORSOOTH! THE STORM HATH TURNED TO A TORRENT OF GARBAGE!
NEXT TIME I'LL USE A MONKEY WRENCH!
SAY! LOOK AT THIS DANDY SKATE KEY! JUST WHAT I NEED!
BUT, LET US LEAVE OUR PEROXIDED PRINCE OF JAZZGARD AS HE PLANS HIS NEXT DARING, DEADLY, DRAMATIC MOVE--
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO--
I'LL STAY HERE AND CRY FOR A WHILE!
AND WHEN HOKEY INVITES ME TO HIS BIRTHDAY PARTY NEXT WEEK, I'LL SHOW HIM--
I'LL GET THERE LATE!
NOW THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE AWESOME POWER OF MIGHTY SORE, 'TIS TIME TO LEARN HOW HE GOT THAT WAY--
2

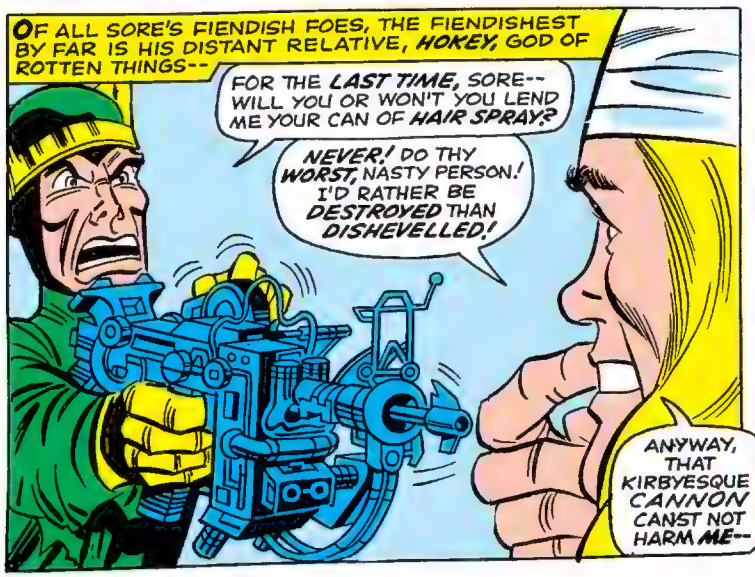

IT ALL BEGAN MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN THE EVER-DELIGHTFUL DR. DARN BLOKE WAS RESTING IN NORWAY AFTER KICKING A WALLET LOADED WITH ROCKS--
NEXT TIME I GO FOR A DRIVE, I MUST REMEMBER--
I'VE GOTTA BRING MY CAR!
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I TOOK A WRONG TURN SOMEWHERE!
BUT, I HAVEN'T A THING TO WORRY ABOUT--
I'M AS SURE-FOOTED AS A MOUNTAIN GOAT!
-OOPS!-
COME TO THINK OF IT, EVEN MOUNTAIN GOATS DON'T LIVE FOREVER!
BETTER STRAIGHTEN MY TIE--
DON'T WANNA LOOK UNKEMPT WHEN I HIT BOTTOM!
ONE THING ABOUT ME--
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AS KEMPT AS THE NEXT GUY!
A THING LIKE THIS CAN REALLY PUT A DAMPER ON A FELLA'S VACATION!
-WOW!- HOW LUCKY CAN YOU BE?!!
THERE'S A NICE NEAT UMBRELLA--JUST MINE FOR THE TAKING!
I'D BETTER LOOK AROUND FOR A WHILE--!
--'CAUSE I CAN USE A NEW PAIR OF GALOSHES, ALSO!
WHAT'S THIS?!! IT HAS A MOTH HOLE IN IT!
IF THERE'S ONE THING I CAN'T STAND, IT'S SHODDY MERCHANDISE!
IF I ACCEPTED THIS INFERIOR ITEM, THEY'D DRUM ME OUT OF CONSUMERS' UNION!
SO, I'LL JUST SLAM IT TO THE GRO--
-YULLP!-
THE JOINT'S HAUNTED!!!
WELL, WADDAYA KNOW! IT HATH TURNED INTO A HAMMER!
--AND MY SPEECH HATH TURNED INTO A LISP!
WHAT GOETH ON HERE??
3

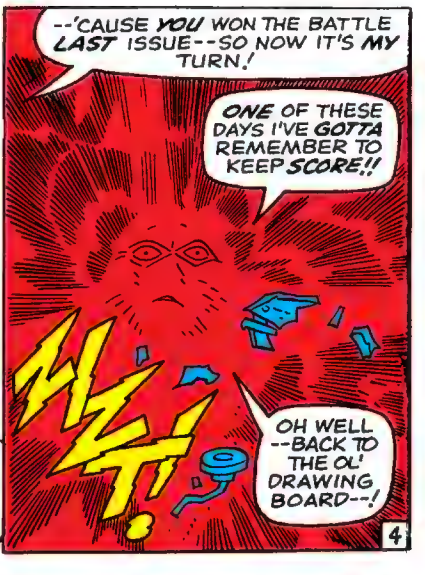
OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! JUST LOOK AT ME! I'M A LIVING DOLL!
EVEN MY MUSCLES HAVE MUSCLES!
THEY SURE KNOW HOW TO GIVE A VISITOR A NICE VACATION AROUND HERE!

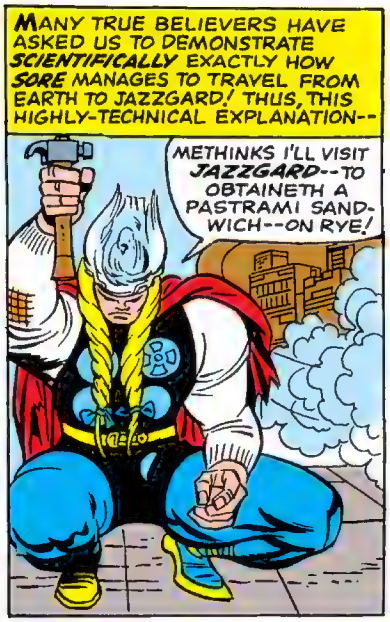

AND SO, HE WHO WAS ONCE THE UNASSUMING DR. DARN BLOKE HAS BEEN MAGICALLY TRANSFORMED INTO THE FLIGHTY SORE, SON OF SHMODIN!
BUT DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT--SEE WHAT THE HAMMER DOTH SAY--
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: YOU ARE NOW A GOD NAMED SORE. SIGNED: Daddy

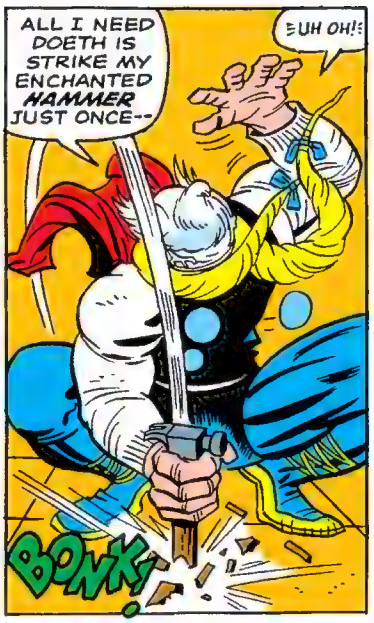

GOSH! IT'S JUST WHAT I ALWAYS WANTED!
EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE KID I WISHED FOR A BIKE, A SET OF BONGO DRUMS, AND GODHOOD!
NOW, ALL I NEED'S THE BIKE--AND THE BONGO DRUMS!


IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW, THE NAME OF SORE BECOMES A HOUSEHOLD WORD--LIKE SANI-FLUSH, AND LIQUID DETERGENT, AND IRVING FORBUSH! HEADLINES EVERYWHERE PROCLAIM HIS DAZZLING DEEDS--
MIGHTY SORE!
SORE DOES IT AGAIN
LONG-HAIR CRAZE CREDITED TO MIGHTY SORE!
REPUBLICANS ASK SORE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENCY!
--ON DEMOCRAT TICKET
BEAUTICIANS HONOR HIM WITH AWARDS.
VARIETY
SORE GETS KE TO CITY!
CAN'T FIND THE LOCK!
SORE IS BOFFO COAST-TO-COAST!
TRENDEX RATINGS GIVE HIM THE EDGE OVER BANANAZA AND
DAILY BUGLE
DAILY EXPRESS
VILLAINS MIGHTY SORE AT MIGHTY SORE!
SPIDER-MAN IS A FINK

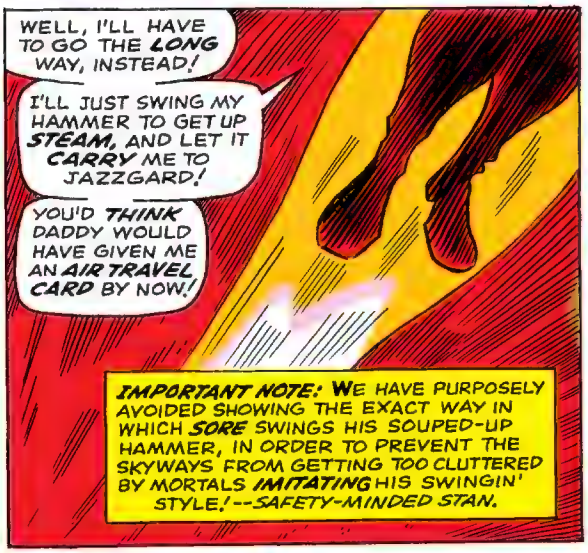

OF ALL SORE'S FIENDISH FOES, THE FIENDISHEST BY FAR IS HIS DISTANT RELATIVE, HOKEY, GOD OF ROTTEN THINGS--
FOR THE LAST TIME, SORE--WILL YOU OR WON'T YOU LEND ME YOUR CAN OF HAIR SPRAY?
NEVER! DO THY WORST, NASTY PERSON! I'D RATHER BE DESTROYED THAN DISHEVELLED!
ANYWAY, THAT KIRBYESQUE CANNON CANST NOT HARM ME--

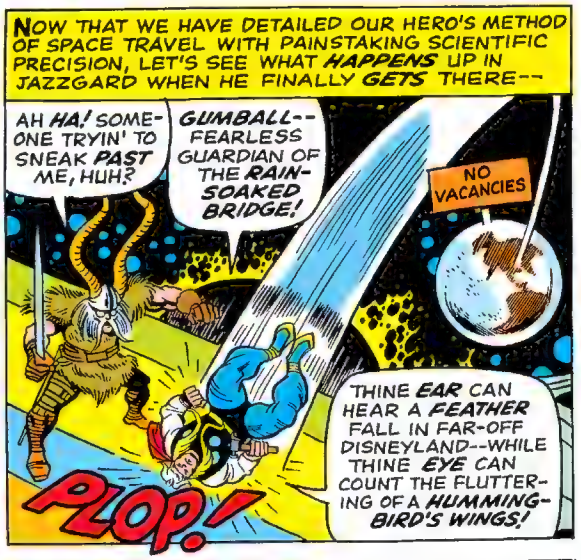

--'CAUSE YOU WON THE BATTLE LAST ISSUE--SO NOW IT'S MY TURN!
ONE OF THESE DAYS I'VE GOTTA REMEMBER TO KEEP SCORE!!
ZZT!
OH WELL --BACK TO THE OL' DRAWING BOARD--!


MANY TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE ASKED US TO DEMONSTRATE SCIENTIFICALLY EXACTLY HOW SORE MANAGES TO TRAVEL FROM EARTH TO JAZZGARD! THUS, THIS HIGHLY-TECHNICAL EXPLANATION--
METHINKS I'LL VISIT JAZZGARD--TO OBTAINETH A PASTRAMI SAND-WICH--ON RYE!

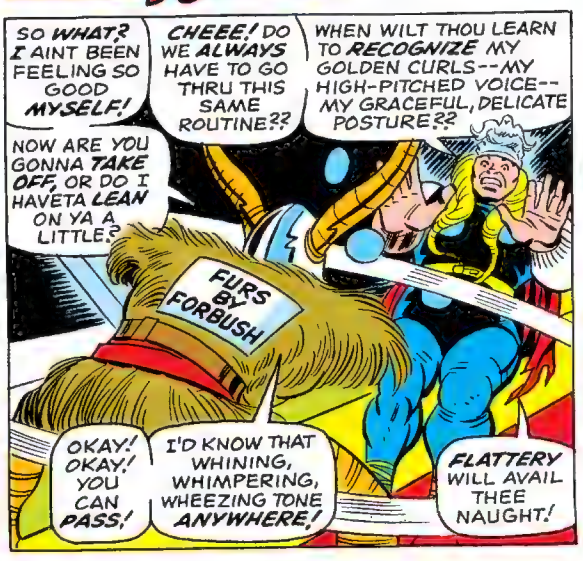

ALL I NEED DOETH IS STRIKE MY ENCHANTED HAMMER JUST ONCE--
UH OH!
BONK!

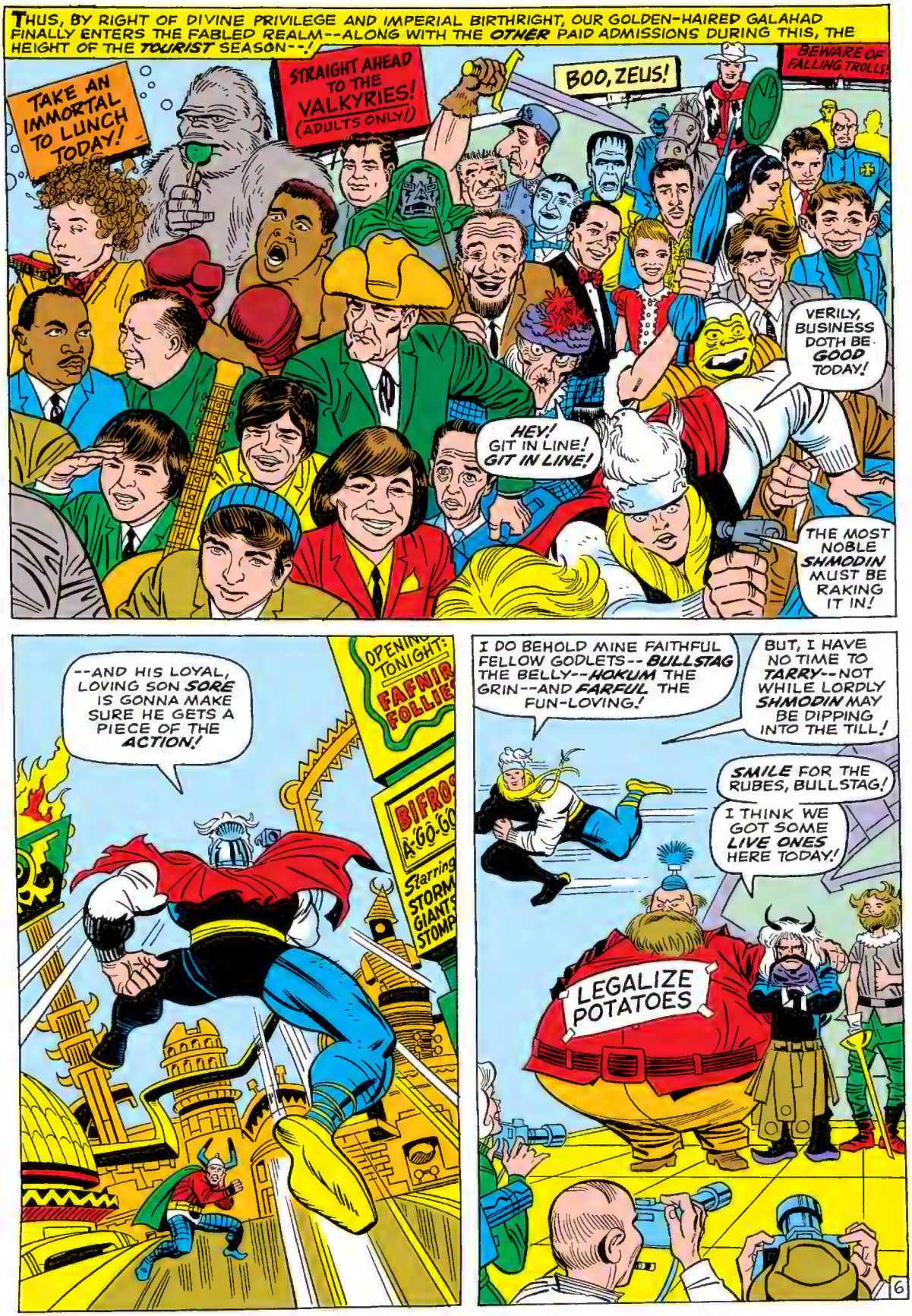
THEY JUST DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO!
THIS IS EMBARRASS-ING! HERE AM I, THE SON OF SHMODIN--WITH A SPLINTER IN MY PINKY!

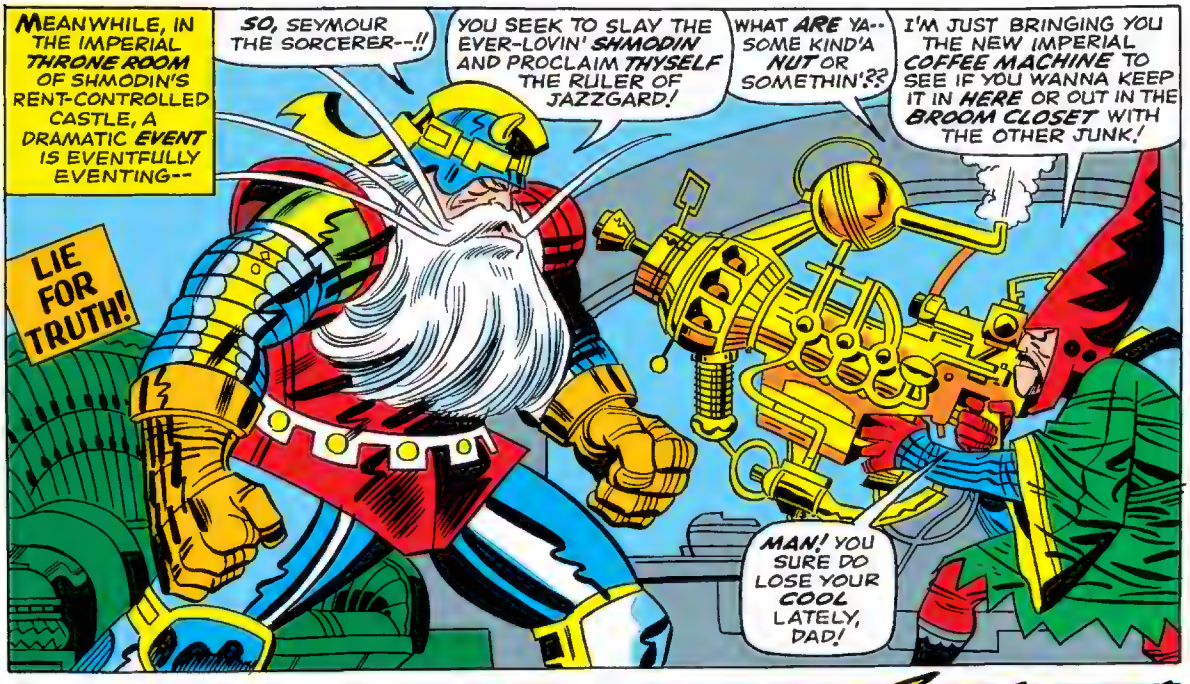

WELL, I'LL HAVE TO GO THE LONG WAY, INSTEAD!
I'LL JUST SWING MY HAMMER TO GET UP STEAM, AND LET IT CARRY ME TO JAZZGARD!
YOU'D THINK DADDY WOULD HAVE GIVEN ME AN AIR TRAVEL CARD BY NOW!
IMPORTANT NOTE: WE HAVE PURPOSELY AVOIDED SHOWING THE EXACT WAY IN WHICH SORE SWINGS HIS SOUPED-UP HAMMER, IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE SKYWAYS FROM GETTING TOO CLUTTERED BY MORTALS IMITATING HIS SWINGIN' STYLE!--SAFETY-MINDED STAN.

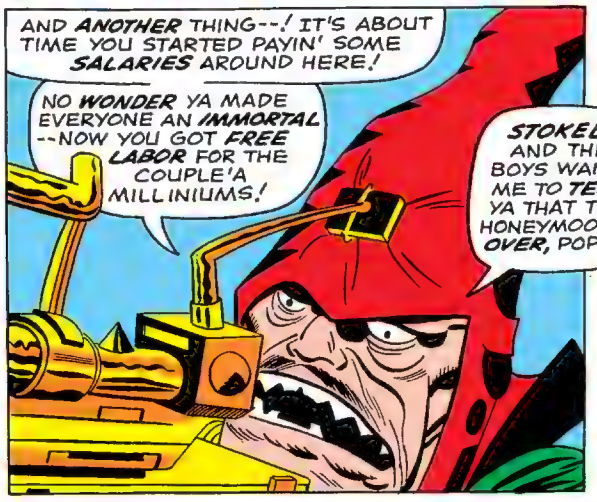

NOW THAT WE HAVE DETAILED OUR HERO'S METHOD OF SPACE TRAVEL WITH PAINSTAKING SCIENTIFIC PRECISION, LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS UP IN JAZZGARD WHEN HE FINALLY GETS THERE--
AH HA! SOME-ONE TRYIN' TO SNEAK PAST ME, HUH?
GUMBALL--FEARLESS GUARDIAN OF THE RAIN-SOAKED BRIDGE!
NO VACANCIES
PLOP!
THINE EAR CAN HEAR A FEATHER FALL IN FAR-OFF DISNEYLAND--WHILE THINE EYE CAN COUNT THE FLUTTER-ING OF A HUMMING-BIRD'S WINGS!

YEAH, YEAH! I'M REAL BIG WITH HUMMING-BIRD'S WINGS AND FALLING FEATHERS--
BUT I'M KINDA SHAKY ON STUFF THAT'S UP CLOSE!
HOW'S ABOUT STEPPIN' BACK A FEW MILLION MILES SO'S I CAN MAKE YOU OUT?
C'MON, MOVE IT, KIDDO! YOU THINK THIS IS ALL I GOT TO DO?
BUT--I'M MIGHTY SORE!

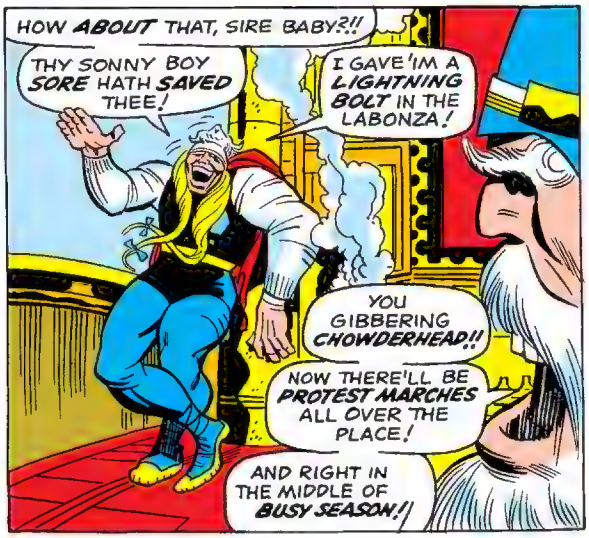

SO WHAT? I AINT BEEN FEELING SO GOOD MYSELF!
CHEEE! DO WE ALWAYS HAVE TO GO THRU THIS SAME ROUTINE??
WHEN WILT THOU LEARN TO RECOGNIZE MY GOLDEN CURLS--MY HIGH-PITCHED VOICE--MY GRACEFUL, DELICATE POSTURE??
NOW ARE YOU GONNA TAKE OFF, OR DO I HAVETA LEAN ON YA A LITTLE?
FURS BY FORBUSH
OKAY! OKAY! YOU CAN PASS!
I'D KNOW THAT WHINING, WHIMPERING, WHEEZING TONE ANYWHERE!
FLATTERY WILL AVAIL THEE NAUGHT!

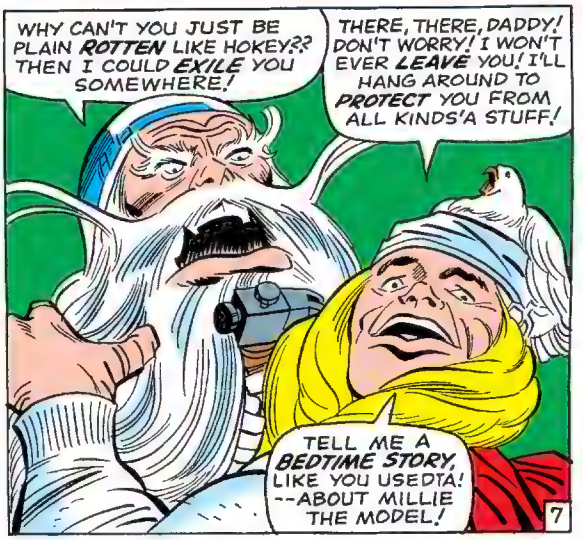

THUS, BY RIGHT OF DIVINE PRIVILEGE AND IMPERIAL BIRTHRIGHT, OUR GOLDEN-HAIRED GALAHAD FINALLY ENTERS THE FABLED REALM--ALONG WITH THE OTHER PAID ADMISSIONS DURING THIS, THE HEIGHT OF THE TOURIST SEASON--!
TAKE AN IMMORTAL TO LUNCH TODAY!
STRAIGHT AHEAD TO THE VALKYRIES! (ADULTS ONLY!)
BOO, ZEUS!
BEWARE OF FALLING TROLLS!
VERILY, BUSINESS DOTH BE GOOD TODAY!
HEY! GIT IN LINE! GIT IN LINE!
THE MOST NOBLE SHMODIN MUST BE RAKING IT IN!
--AND HIS LOYAL, LOVING SON SORE IS GONNA MAKE SURE HE GETS A PIECE OF THE ACTION!
OPENING TONIGHT:
FAFNIR FOLLIES
BIFROST A-GO-GO
Starring STORM GIANTS STOMP
I DO BEHOLD MINE FAITHFUL FELLOW GODLETS-- BULLSTAG THE BELLY--HOKUM THE GRIN--AND FARFUL THE FUN-LOVING!
BUT, I HAVE NO TIME TO TARRY--NOT WHILE LORDLY SHMODIN MAY BE DIPPING INTO THE TILL!
SMILE FOR THE RUBES, BULLSTAG!
I THINK WE GOT SOME LIVE ONES HERE TODAY!
LEGALIZE POTATOES
6

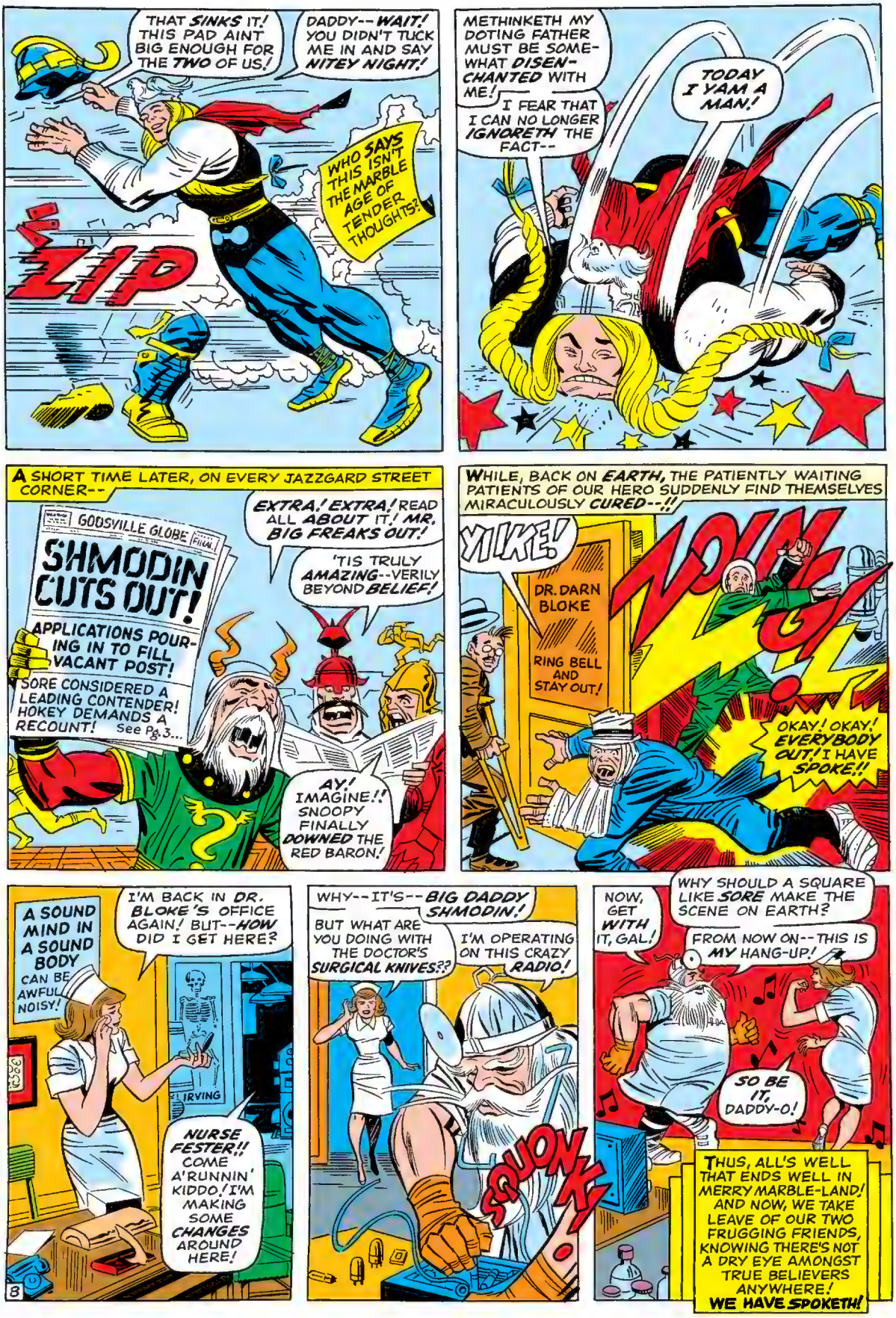

MEANWHILE, IN THE IMPERIAL THRONE ROOM OF SHMODIN'S RENT-CONTROLLED CASTLE, A DRAMATIC EVENT IS EVENTFULLY EVENTING--
LIE FOR TRUTH!
SO, SEYMOUR THE SORCERER--!!
YOU SEEK TO SLAY THE EVER-LOVIN' SHMODIN AND PROCLAIM THYSELF THE RULER OF JAZZGARD!
WHAT ARE YA--SOME KIND'A NUT OR SOMETHIN'??
I'M JUST BRINGING YOU THE NEW IMPERIAL COFFEE MACHINE TO SEE IF YOU WANNA KEEP IT IN HERE OR OUT IN THE BROOM CLOSET WITH THE OTHER JUNK!
MAN! YOU SURE DO LOSE YOUR COOL LATELY, DAD!


AND ANOTHER THING--! IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU STARTED PAYIN' SOME SALARIES AROUND HERE!
NO WONDER YA MADE EVERYONE AN IMMORTAL --NOW YOU GOT FREE LABOR FOR THE COUPLE'A MILLINIUMS!
STOKELY AND THE BOYS WANT ME TO TELL YA THAT THE HONEYMOON'S OVER, POPS!

ZAK!
AWW--FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD--!!


HOW ABOUT THAT, SIRE BABY?!!
THY SONNY BOY SORE HATH SAVED THEE!
I GAVE 'IM A LIGHTNING BOLT IN THE LABONZA!
YOU GIBBERING CHOWDERHEAD!!
NOW THERE'LL BE PROTEST MARCHES ALL OVER THE PLACE!
AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF BUSY SEASON!!


WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE PLAIN ROTTEN LIKE HOKEY?? THEN I COULD EXILE YOU SOMEWHERE!
THERE, THERE, DADDY! DON'T WORRY! I WON'T EVER LEAVE YOU! I'LL HANG AROUND TO PROTECT YOU FROM ALL KINDS'A STUFF!
TELL ME A BEDTIME STORY, LIKE YOU USEDTA! --ABOUT MILLIE THE MODEL!


THAT SINKS IT! THIS PAD AINT BIG ENOUGH FOR THE TWO OF US!
DADDY--WAIT! YOU DIDN'T TUCK ME IN AND SAY NITEY NIGHT!
WHO SAYS THIS ISN'T THE MARBLE AGE OF TENDER THOUGHTS?
ZIP
METHINKETH MY DOTING FATHER MUST BE SOMEWHAT DISENCHANTED WITH ME!
I FEAR THAT I CAN NO LONGER IGNORETH THE FACT--
TODAY I YAM A MAN!
A SHORT TIME LATER, ON EVERY JAZZGARD STREET CORNER--
GOOSVILLE GLOBE FINAL
SHMODIN CUTS OUT!
APPLICATIONS POURING IN TO FILL VACANT POST!
SORE CONSIDERED A LEADING CONTENDER! HOKEY DEMANDS A RECOUNT!
See Pg. 3...
EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! MR. BIG FREAKS OUT!
'TIS TRULY AMAZING--VERILY BEYOND BELIEF!
AY! IMAGINE!! SNOOPY FINALLY DOWNED THE RED BARON!
WHILE, BACK ON EARTH, THE PATIENTLY WAITING PATIENTS OF OUR HERO SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES MIRACULOUSLY CURED--!!
YIKE!
DR. DARN BLOKE
RING BELL AND STAY OUT!
NOW!
OKAY! OKAY! EVERYBODY OUT! I HAVE SPOKE!!
A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY CAN BE AWFUL NOISY!
I'M BACK IN DR. BLOKE'S OFFICE AGAIN! BUT--HOW DID I GET HERE?
IRVING
NURSE FESTER!! COME A'RUNNIN' KIDDO! I'M MAKING SOME CHANGES AROUND HERE!
WHY--IT'S--BIG DADDY SHMODIN!
BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THE DOCTOR'S SURGICAL KNIVES??
I'M OPERATING ON THIS CRAZY RADIO!
SQUONK
NOW, GET WITH IT, GAL!
WHY SHOULD A SQUARE LIKE SORE MAKE THE SCENE ON EARTH?
FROM NOW ON--THIS IS MY HANG-UP!
SO BE IT, DADDY-O!
THUS, ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL IN MERRY MARBLE-LAND! AND NOW, WE TAKE LEAVE OF OUR TWO FRUGGING FRIENDS, KNOWING THERE'S NOT A DRY EYE AMONGST TRUE BELIEVERS ANYWHERE! WE HAVE SPOKETH!
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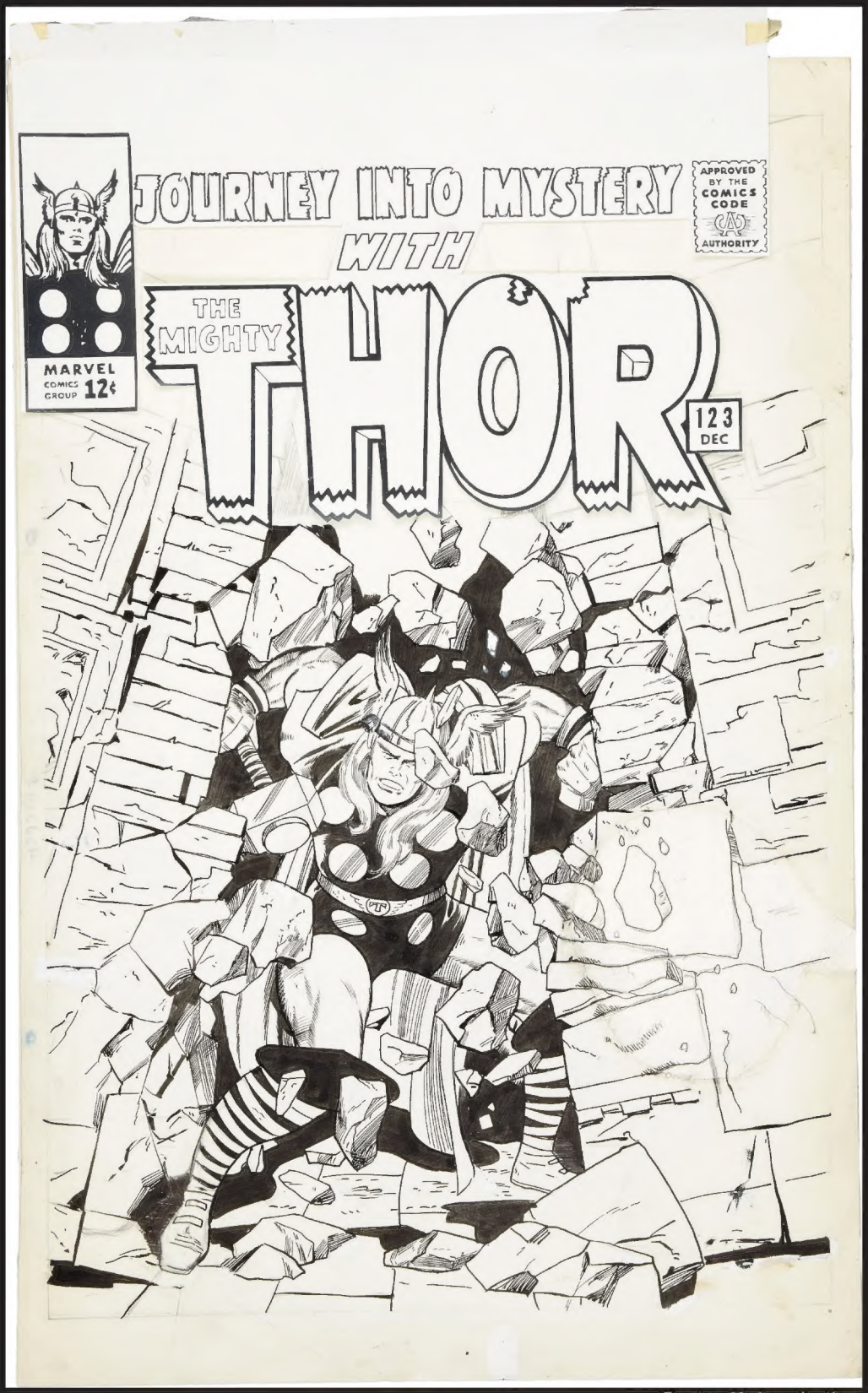
Journey Into Mystery #123 cover original art
by Jack Kirby & Vince Colletta



Courtesy Heritage Auctions

BIOGRAPHIES

STAN LEE

Stanley Lieber was born in New York City in 1922, the oldest son of Jewish immigrants from Romania. Upon an early graduation from high school, Stan was thrust in to the Depression-era economy. Meanwhile, Martin Goodman's Timely Comics needed staff, and Stan, Goodman's wife's cousin, joined as an assistant editor. His youthful aspiration was to one day write the "Great American Novel," so for his comic book work he adopted a pseudonym: Stan Lee. This way, he could reserve his real name for that novel-to-be.

He quickly graduated from simple text pieces to full-length stories, and before long his proficiency on the job earned him the position of managing editor while still a teenager. His tenure in the '50s saw the company's expansion (under the name Atlas) to include horror, crime, Western, war, satire and romance comics.

All this was a prelude to the Marvel Age of Comics, ushered in under the auspices of Stan Lee and a small stable of artists including the formidably talented Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. Responding to Martin Goodman's challenge to find a way to find a way to revitalize dwindling sales, Lee figured he would co-opt the super-hero revival at DC Comics and add his own magic to the mix: Instead of being perfect invulnerable champions, Marvel's heroes would be normal, fallible, imperfect people forced to cope with their newfound superhuman traits just as the average person might.

Lee's innovation sent shock waves throughout comics, and within a few years, Marvelmania was taking hold. Under his direction, the Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Iron Man, Thor, Doctor Strange and the Incredible Hulk flourished in the shared universe they inhabited. Lee developed the idea that these larger-than-life heroes would meet each other in crossovers from title to title, thus broadening the story possibilities for eager fans.

In addition to bringing a new twist to the life of the super hero, Lee also brought the reader inside Marvel's "Batty Bullpen," creating a sense of camaraderie and special membership. His friendly and enthusiastic banter in letters pages, house ads and Bullpen Bulletins brought Marvel Comics to a level of familiarity with their fans that had kids and college students proudly professing themselves to be "True Believers."

At one time, Lee wrote virtually every comic that Marvel published during the '60s. But when he was promoted to publisher in 1971, his writing had to take a backseat, and by the mid-'70s, he semi-retired from scripting duties. Over the years, Lee has returned to write scripts for the occasional single issue or series, focusing on Marvel's ventures into television and movie development. His standing in the field was recognized with his induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 1994, and to this day, he remains Marvel Comics' single greatest ambassador to the world.

JACK KIRBY

Jacob Kurtzberg was born in 1917 and grew up in New York's gritty Lower East Side. It would be many years before he would adopt the name Jack Kirby, but his experiences in the neighborhood would help inform the work that later made him a legend. Unlike many of his rough-and-tumble peers, his imagination inspired him to look beyond the commonality of everyday life. He was inclined at an early age to pursue drawing, and he was also a guy who wanted to "get things done." This hard work ethic and ambition took him places most men of humble stations would never dream of going.

After early strip work helped get his name out to employers, a fateful meeting with artist Joe Simon connected the two at the hip and vaulted both of them into comics prominence. Together, they developed Captain America for Timely Comics, and Kirby immediately helped redefine what comics could be with his innovative page designs and proportion-exploding panels.

Soon, Simon and Kirby were working at National/DC, turning out hit kid-gang comics like *Newsboy Legion* and *Boy Commandos*, as well as super-hero fare like Sandman and Manhunter. He served honorably in World War II, with combat duties that took him through the European theater.

After the war, Simon and Kirby established the romance genre with *Young Romance*, produced titles including *Boy's Ranch*, *Black Magic* and *Fighting American*, and started their own imprint, Mainline. Kirby followed with *Challengers of the Unknown*, Green Arrow and the strip *Sky Masters of the Space Force*. By 1958, he began a prolific output at Atlas/Marvel that covered Western, war and monster genres. When it came time to launch the Marvel Age of Comics, Kirby brought his dynamic layouts, unparalleled action and unbridled creativity to the fore in books like *Fantastic Four*, *Avengers*, *X-Men*, *Incredible Hulk* and *Thor*, leaving his unmistakable stamp on the characters.

Through it all, he earned the nickname "The King," and his way of doing things became so popular that it set the tone throughout the '60s; before they were entrusted with taking over completely, new artists were often assimilated on to books by working over Kirby's layouts. Kirby left Marvel for DC in 1970, this time handling scripting chores as well as art duties. His "Fourth World" books, along with *Kamandi*, *OMAC* and *The Demon*, were just a few of the highlights of his tenure at DC before returning to Marvel in the late '70s to lend his imagination to *The Eternals*, *Devil Dinosaur* and *Machine Man*. He also returned to the pages of *Captain America*, the character he had first made famous 35 years previously.

Kirby was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame's 1987 inaugural class and continued creating comics throughout the '90s until passing away in 1994, a creative giant for whom the word "legend" may be too small a title.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS

ALSO AVAILABLE IN HARDCOVER

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-15
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-2
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-12
THE BLACK PANTHER VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-4
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-6
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-3
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-5
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-14
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-7
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-7
IRON FIST VOLS. 1-2
KA-ZAR VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-2
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-4
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-11
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-8

THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

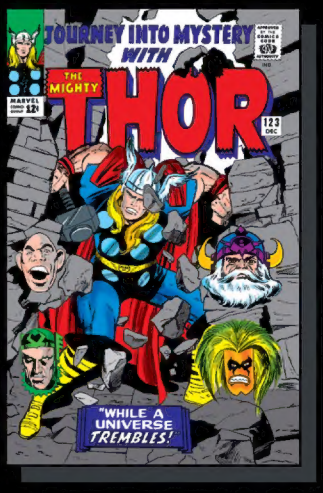
At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

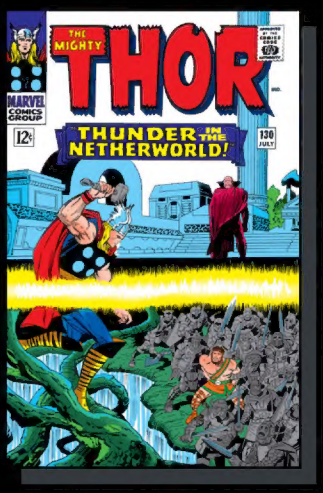
GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-5
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1





THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS PROUDLY PRESENT THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS COMICS AND SUPER HEROES FROM THEIR VERY BEGINNINGS IN A SERIES OF PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED ARCHIVAL VOLUMES.

COLLECTING *JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY* #121-125, *THE MIGHTY THOR* #126-130 & *NOT BRAND ECHH* #3

MARVEL